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The Saturday Review of Literature

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

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THE BRONX TRAVELING LIBRARY

The New York Public Library's book wagon, which serves 14,879 readers in the Bronx, where no branch libraries are convenient. Each week the wagon travels some ninety miles, makes twenty-one stops, circulates an average of 2,000 volumes.

Vigorous Humor

MAGNUS MERRIMAN. By Eric Linklater. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1934. $2.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE STEVENS

THE practice of prefacing modern novels with the statement that no character bears any relation to any living person has become increasingly widespread. But in any given instance such a disavowal is either unconvincing, or, if not unconvincing, superfluous. In the case of "Magnus Merriman" it is happily the latter, for Magnus, if he lives by virtue of the author's enormous vigor and gusto, lives his own life. When a character has the vitality and the completeness of a Magnus Merriman, when the novel in which he lives has so much reality of its own, the question of specific relationships is beside the point.

In any case Magnus is the kind of person who is much more fun to read about than to know. (This is one of the many attractive features of the novel.) He has an uncritical and perpetual enthusiasm which would be trying in an acquaintance, but without which he could not participate in such an outlandish series of adventures and imbroglios. The events have a picaresque quality; but "Magnus Merriman" is not a picaresque novel, for all the incidents, extraordinary as they may be, ultimately originate in the character of Magnus. He is the kind of young man whose intelligence, ability, and personality command a certain respect, but whose elaborate ambitions, whether amorous, political, or literary, lead him into fiascos often enough to make him an ideal subject for the comic spirit. And this Mr. Linklater displays in abundance.

It does not, perhaps, in the cold detachment of a summary, sound funny to say that Magnus Merriman and his friend Francis Meiklejohn dispute the merits of Shakespeare and Racine with a heated enthusiasm that leads to a brawl and lands them both in jail. It probably does not sound funny to say that Magnus gets simultaneously mixed up with the Scottish Nationalist Party and with a tough American girl temporarily in Edinburgh. Yet these events, as they appear in Mr. Linklater's narration, have a humor that is rich and free. Most of the story takes

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The Juice of the Tenderized Prune

WHILE ROME BURNS. By Alexander Woollcott. New York: The Viking Press. 1934. $2.75.

Reviewed by LEONARD BACON

MR. WOOLLCOTT'S "While Rome Burns" arouses in this reviewer mingled emotions. The book in question is a selection from Mr. Woollcott's contribution to literature over a period of six years, and unquestionably has much in it to divert or to edify.

Mr. Woollcott is without doubt an entertaining, and at times a stimulating writer. He has fine admirations which do him honor and to offset them splenetic and dubious vagaries. It is good to hear him speak up heartily and eloquently in praise of Mrs. Richards, Maxine Elliot, or the Marquis of Villalobar. It is perhaps not so pleasant to follow him into those regions of Platonic sadism, where he apes but does not attain the performance of his acknowledged master, Mr. Edmund Pearson. Where Mr. Pearson produces something with a family resemblance to Goya, Mr. Woollcott achieves the emotional effects which I personally connect in my thoughts with Madame Tussaud's bust of Marat. Nor can I forget a character in "Pickwick" who wanted to make your flesh creep.

Two of his characteristics have been economically glanced at. His interest in the theatre is another which may be touched in passing. As a dramatic critic he seemed to me formerly, as he seems to me now, occasionally entertaining and sometimes effective, the last, of course, when he agreed with me. For instance, I congratulate him on his failure to be impressed by the second-hand modernity of O'Neill's repertoire of dramaturgic legerdemain. But I think, as I thought six years back, that his esthetic judgments are far too highly colored by his private likes and dislikes. I don't mean that his opinions are dishonest, but I do mean that sentimental considerations bias his estimates to an inordinate degree.

After all, this is merely a mean way of saying that Mr. Woollcott is as human as you are. But he does one thing which I find hard to forgive, worse than his studies in the vulgar macabre, worse than his ill-

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The Plight of the Libraries

BY CARL H. MILAM

PEOPLE who like to borrow books from public libraries—or who would if the books they want were not always out—can thank R. L. Duffus and his publisher for dramatizing the plight of public libraries in his latest book, "Our Starving Libraries" (Houghton Mifflin: $1.25). "The depression years have been full of irony," he says, "but they have yielded nothing more ironical than the country-wide slash in library budgets which has accompanied the equally widespread demand for library services."

Are libraries starving? They are. Here and there one will find exceptions, but not many. In Detroit last year five branches were closed with a resulting drop of twenty-four per cent in books borrowed for home use. This was not Detroit's first cut. Chicago stopped buying books nearly three years ago and is now watching its circulation drop at the rate of 150,000 volumes a month. Its reference department, which has rendered distinguished service to Chicago authors and research workers, as well as to general inquirers, reports that forty per cent of its reference questions must now go unanswered. In 1933 the twelve branches of the Rochester, New York, Public Library were open only two days a week. Even the central library was reduced to part-time service.

"Only those who have tried to use the branches on the two days they have been open can have any idea of what happened," writes John A. Lowe, the librarian.

> The crowds gathered and jammed entrances long before the hour for opening, rushed in and seized armfuls of books to last for their reading until the next library day. The rooms were so inadequate to take care of the crushes that at times borrowers were admitted by groups of five, and at other times it has been necessary to ask them to leave at the end of half an hour. The staff was so depleted that no attempt could be made to give assistance in book selection or in the looking up of answers to questions. The renewal of books by telephone had to be abandoned in order that desk attendants might care for people who had made the effort to come to the library.

The average of adult borrowing per hour, he added, increased 149 per cent.

The budget for the Public Library of Des Moines, Iowa, has been decreased from $172,759 to $79,793. And this, says Forrest Spaulding, the librarian, comes on top of decreases in the appropriation during recent years to what, in the opinion of the city council, was the lowest possible amount with which adequate service could be rendered. In Seattle, Washington, the 1934 library appropriation is $259,490 as compared with more than $400,000 in 1929. Obviously it has not been possible to put such heroic economies into effect without drastic curtailment of the service. In several small cities throughout the county libraries have been actually closed.

Library budgets have never been inflated. The library's share of the total cost of government is an almost insignificant fraction. Even in the prosperous days of 1929 the cost of public libraries to American cities was about one and two-fifth cents of the tax dollar. The Springfield, Massachusetts, library a few years ago showed that the people of Springfield were reading about $35 worth of books per inhabitant per year at a per capita cost of ninety cents. Last year the books read by users of the Albany, New York, Public Library would have cost, if each reader had purchased them individually, two million dollars. But the total cost for upkeep of the library was only about one-eighteenth of this sum.

Does it matter? One might naturally assume that if public libraries starve, booksellers and publishers and incidentally authors would prosper and grow fat. Unfortunately this is not the case. Apparently most of the users of public libraries are people who will not, perhaps can not, buy the books they need. If they can not borrow from the library they will go without their books.

Since 1929 four or five million new readers have become registered borrowers in public libraries, bringing the estimated total up to somewhere around twenty-four millions. The number of books borrowed for home use has increased more than forty-one per cent, according to estimates based on exact figures for selected libraries. Thousands have been driven to reading by enforced leisure, the need for vocational readjustment to help in finding or holding a job, the desire for recreation which costs nothing, and a hope that through reading they may understand something of what is happening to America and the world. One librarian observed recently that "more families are served by the library than by the school system, and overwhelmingly greater numbers of families get direct service from the library than from the health, fire, and police departments."

Reading in Washington, D. C., has increased sixty-eight per cent in the last four years, and while much of it has been of fiction, an increasing percentage has been in subject fields of social importance. George F. Bowerman, the librarian, says: "The effect of economic and monetary discussions is shown plainly by an increase of 151% in the demand for books on eco-

This Week

MIRACLE ON SINAI
By OSBERT SITWELL
Reviewed by Elmer Davis

A JOURNAL OF THESE DAYS
By ALBERT JAY NOCK
Reviewed by Royal J. Davis

SAMUEL JOHNSON
By HUGH KINGSMILL
Reviewed by Chauncey B. Tinker

IN SIGHT OF EDEN
By ROGER VERCEL
Reviewed by William Doerflinger

ROBERT E. LEE
By ROBERT W. WINSTON
Reviewed by William Allen White

THE BOWLING GREEN
By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

TABLOID REVIEWING
By ALICIA PATTERSON and CHARLES A. WAGNER

Next Week or Later

SIDNEY HOWARD
By JOHN CORBIN

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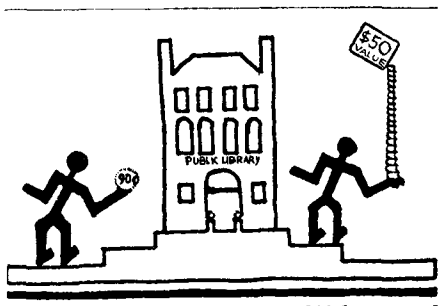
nomics, education, and political science. The increase in the demand for biography has been 132%, history 121%, philosophy, psychology and religion 102%, and arts and crafts ninety-two per cent." From a single branch library in Chicago, fifty thousand books on a thousand subjects, excluding fiction and biography, were borrowed by readers within a period of six months in 1932.

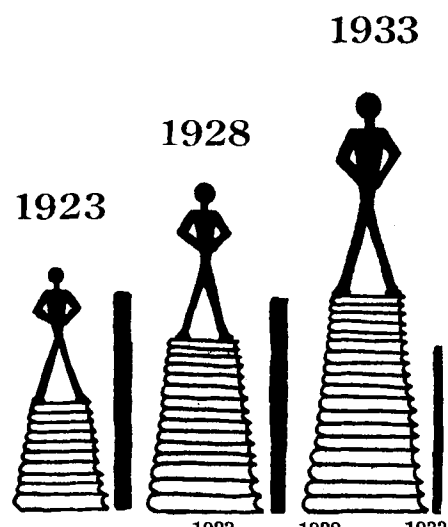
Social trends, as recently revealed to the world, point to an increasing quantity and complexity of knowledge, to a constantly increasing rate of change, and to more and more leisure time. All are new reasons for considering an agency which supplies the public with many of its books, periodicals, and pamphlets, and with guidance in their use, a thing of some importance.

That the public wants and will use library service is amply demonstrated by library statistics. That unemployment and social unrest greatly increase the use of libraries is also evident. For two or three years the figures climbed steadily. Now they have begun to recede. Depleted stocks of books, many books in poor condition, lack of new books, reduced hours of opening, and the poorer service resulting from overworked librarians, all are having their effect.

Yes, I think it does matter. Not only personally to the millions who use libra-



The average library user in 1933 borrowed 20 books, worth $50.00 in a bookstore. This service costs not quite 90c a person if divided equally among the residents. (From the Newark Public Library.)



	1923	1928	1933
Card holders	61,923	88,385	128,615
Books lent	1,014,713	1,795,067	2,538,596
Hours open	19,322	19,322	13,788

A DIAGRAM ISSUED BY THE NEWARK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Who cares? If the estimated twenty-four million people who use public libraries with some regularity really cared, would those libraries be starving? For the most part they have taken the reduction in library service calmly—too calmly. Has anyone heard of people rioting in front of a public library because the budget was cut in half, because new books were no longer bought, or even because a library was closed? Not that any librarian would want a riot. But librarians and library trustees, who have been trying to maintain their services because they believe that the public library is an essential educational agency in a democratic society and more particularly because it seems to offer to its many patrons certain enduring satisfactions, would welcome at times some organized protest against great reductions.

They believe their libraries have been operated with a reasonable degree of intelligence. They know they have been operated honestly and economically, in the public interest. There has been no graft and little extravagance. Librarians and library assistants, for the most part, have been appointed, not because of political or personal influence, but because they appear to be qualified for the job. They have been alert to new methods, new techniques, new mechanical devices which would improve service and promote efficiency and economy. Yet they have had to stand by while tax-payers' committees condemned libraries as luxuries and demanded that their appropriations be cut, precisely as if they had been notorious for their wasteful extravagance. And their readers, in the main, have done nothing.

What can the reader do about it? If most readers have done nothing, there are some notable exceptions. In one community, the county board, meeting quietly to make up its budget, all at once found the room filled with library patrons. Before they left, the officials had found a way of returning several thousand dollars to the appropriation for the county library. In another county a citizens' committee of this sort have been heard, but not many. Wherever the effort has been made some results appear to have been achieved.

A good many letters have of course been written to newspapers and magazines. A former advertising expert now keeping records for a County Emergency Work Board describes in the December issue of the *Survey Graphic* "How One Family Met the Depression." "We have become regular visitors at the public library," he writes. "Each week the four of us return home with armfuls of books; latest novels and old classics; books on gardening and books on religion; books on how to raise goldfish and how to repair automobiles. All are grist for our mill."

A contributor to Seattle's *Town Crier* writes:

> Vagabondia has developed a new caste of frowsy social outcasts. . . . They spend their days stuffing their craniums with Shakespeare, aviation, psychology, sociology, economics, and the Einstein theory. This is no superficial observation. I speak from experience. . . . I am thankful for the misty days that drove me into the library. It seems that scrimmaging through books has raised a curtain of mist from my mental horizon. . . . I thought, when I first began to read, that Bolshevism and the millennium were synonymous terms, but thick volumes of history show that the old see-saw struggle between reactionary and progressive forces have (sic) been going on since the days of the dinosaurs.

Appealing to authors to rally to the support of libraries, both in their own and the public interest—library book purchases decreased thirty-four and five-tenths per cent from 1932 to 1933—the National Association of Book Publishers says:

> Beyond the immediate loss of the main market for his work the author of serious and scholarly books is vitally affected by this situation in [one] respect that is not so self-evident. Curtailment of library purchases of books of this kind must produce, in the long run, a serious deficiency in the necessary tools of research—the basic books of today which will be needed in the work of tomorrow. Not only are libraries ceasing to purchase such books; the publisher is finding that the lack of a market compels him to refuse publication of many works of genuine worth because he cannot underwrite the losses necessarily involved to bring them out. Unless authors of this class of books are prepared to subsidize their product, it seems likely that publication of them will become increasingly difficult.

Realizing the dependence of the library and other social services upon organized public opinion, representatives of the American Library Association and fifty other national organizations last year started a movement for the establishment of local Citizens' Councils for Constructive Economy, a movement which is now under the leadership of the National Municipal League with the coöperation of many other organizations. These Citizens' Councils are composed of representatives of existing civic and social groups and their purpose is to study municipal expenditures, help bring about desirable economies, and at the same time assure the maintenance of essential social services. Many such Councils have been on the library budget. Many never ask for enough money in the first place. They are conscious—and wisely so, I think—of the necessity of avoiding everything that savors of propaganda for their jobs and their institutions. Even so, a friendly critic might well ask the librarian and library board whether they have done what they could safely do to make their patrons understand. Do library borrowers know where the library money comes from, how carefully it is spent, who are responsible for tax levies or appropriations, why so few new books are bought, why the hours of opening are reduced, and what they can do about it? In some cities the answer is yes—Minneapolis is an excellent example—but in too many the answer is no.

I do not feel that many libraries will actually starve to death, though a few have already lapsed into unconsciousness. There is, however, great danger that the libraries, unless somebody comes to their aid, will continue in a famished condition for several years. It cannot be expected that tax-supported institutions will return to prosperity as quickly as business; taxes are levied a year or more in advance. Moreover, the demand for reduction of expenditures has grown to enormous proportions. Laws have been passed in several states, and are proposed in many others, which fix a definite limit to the amount that may be levied for all local purposes. Both the public clamor and the administration of the laws are largely undiscriminating. Reduction applies not only to those departments which are filled with political pay-rollers, but also to the institutions which are rendering important services at low cost.

If the public library is soon to become what its patrons wish it to become and to do what in the interest of society it ought to do, it may be because the twenty-four million borrowers have decided to do something about it.

Carl H. Milam is secretary of the American Library Association.

Silver Poem for J.

By RICHARD THOMA

DO you remember Paris paling in the dawn?—
We walked along the soft green gardens of the Luxembourg,
strangling, our hearts dying, our hands wrenched and spasmodic,
etiolating wings and angels in our eyes as tragic
as the morning song the birds sang to the sleeping poor.—
And Paris, Paris, coming to meet us like a marble faun.

Can you forget Paris? Can you forget your agonies?
The skies like solemn architraves. The bells of St. Sulpice
leaping to God. The dew-hushed green. The nimbus of the dying moon.
The sacred ghosts fading. The summer sun rising too soon,
obliterating our sculptured dreams . . . . No. After Paris
one can have no more thoughts, but only memories.

And when I think of Paris, Paris turns into you, at dawn—
You, disappearing down the street, tears in your mourning eyes,
the city shattering about you, the crystal skies falling—
Socrates, Aristotle, Plato turning the echoes of your sighs
into the sad festival of my mind at its flowering.—
And Paris, Paris, falling like a statue and breaking like a faun.
Dear one, my brain is locked. You forged the anarchy.
Without your stratagem Paris were dead and I long free.

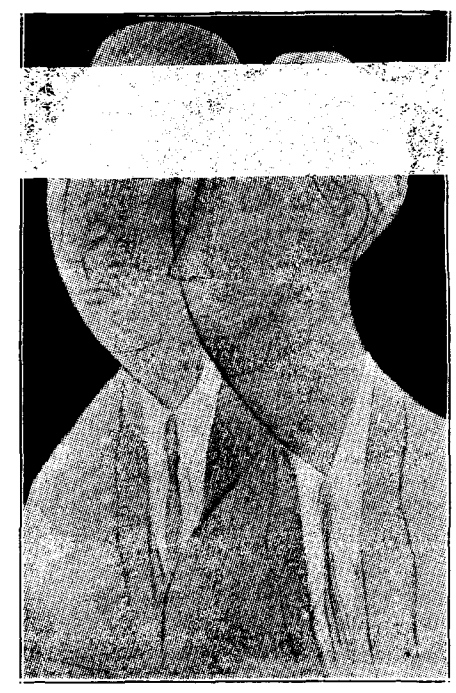
The Gods Appear to the Moderns

MIRACLE ON SINAI. By Osbert Sitwell. New York: Henry Holt & Company. 1934. $2.

Reviewed by ELMER DAVIS

THE blurb writer who finds Mr. Sitwell's novel "penetrating without being bitter" must be a hard-boiled person. If this apologue of the nature, past and present, of mankind, is not a bitter book, neither is "Candide." Without being a "Candide," "Miracle on Sinai" is immensely amusing, with some really distinguished satire on figures and types of contemporary England; but its essential point is nothing for the human race to give three cheers about.

At the Aaron Palace Hotel at the foot of Mount Sinai is gathered a company including a self-consciously Napoleonic newspaper peer, an Anglo-Indian general of the treat-'em-rough school; an Anglo-Jewish financier and his fervently Bolshevik son; an Arab Prince and his suite; a Bishop, an earnest young clergyman, a distinguished palæontologist, a Catholic priest, and a titled nymphomaniac; and one T. L. Enfelon, probably the best of the numerous characters of fiction inspired by the late D. H. Lawrence. All of them, in all their varieties of faith, stemming from the revelation once vouchsafed on Sinai. They all go to the top of the sacred mountain for a picnic, and there descends on them from a cloud such a theophany as once visited Elijah; leaving behind it visible and tangible proof in the form of two tables of stone, inscribed with legible commandments. What became of the Tables of Stone? And what were the commandments in which the divine will was once more unmistakably made clear to men? To disclose that would be to give away Mr. Sitwell's point; and everybody who likes civilized writing (of a rather ornate type)



OSBERT AND SACHEVERELL SITWELL, BY MAX BEERBOHM
From "Observations" (Heinemann).

and civilized thinking ought to read the book and find out for himself.

To begin to quote from it would stir the temptation to quote endlessly; but you will find innumerable sharp perceptions, brilliantly expressed, on current society. The characters are mostly no more than sketches of the comic-strip type; but Sitwell has lavished loving care on two or three of them—notably the Lawrence man and his devoted aunt, who did her best to forward the "cult of dark gods and blood-wisdom" by standing nude at her hotel window and fervently reciting a litany of four-letter words.

Many readers will remember "Father Malachy's Miracle" of two or three years past—a shrewd and entertaining work somewhat marred for Protestant readers by the author's conviction that all Protestants are hypocrites. Sitwell is more impartial; his people, of every creed, behave as people of all creeds usually have behaved in history. One might almost say as much of his deity, who sends out his broadcasts with the foreknowledge that all our receiving sets are faulty.

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As Mr. Nock Sees It

A JOURNAL OF THESE DAYS. June 1932—December 1933. By Albert Jay Nock. New York: William Morrow & Company. 1934. $2.75.

Reviewed by ROYAL J. DAVIS

CAUSTIC, anecdotal, reflective, humorous, sentimental, in turns, but always piquant, these jottings of a year and a half by one of the keenest of observers range from characteristic condemnation of American civilization to curiosity over the absence of mosquitoes in Seville and enthusiasm for a performance of the "Petit Faust" in Brussels. On one page we have the protagonist of the old *Freeman*—"editor" is far too mild a word for the challenging Mr. Nock—with his devotion to Henry George and the single tax. On the next appears the literary man-about-town, who explains that he prefers New York in the summer ("if I must be there at all"), because while the physical discomfort is great, "the spiritual discomfort is enough less to give a balance."

The most piquant condemnation of our sad state occurs in a quotation from an unnamed French journalist: "Americans are the only people who have passed directly from barbarism to decadence without knowing civilization." Mr. Nock believes this to be true; "at least," he remarks slyly, "I know of no other people who have done so." He would no more give his favorite doctrine of the single tax to the American people than he would give a watch to a child: "Our people are incapable of managing even the bad economic system that they have, and it would be utter lunacy to entrust them with a good one." The only remedy for a people like us, then, is to have no economic system at all.

Occasionally Mr. Nock's disgust with his country leads him into absurdities. "Why," he asks, "do not the newspapers print the day-to-day index of unemployment under a standing head, like the weather-reports?" As well ask why they don't print the day-to-day number of people in the country or the number of radios in actual use during the preceding twenty-four hours. Worse is his blundering dictum: "By requiring representatives to live in their district, the Constitution precludes the consideration of any question by any other than a purely local aspect." The requirement that a Representative must live in his district exists only in Mr. Nock's imagination. All that the Constitution requires is that he live in the State from which he is elected. A district may choose its representative from any other district in the state. Does any district ever do so? And does Mr. Nock fancy that if the present restriction were removed, districts in different states would be competing for the glory of being represented in Congress by the best men to be found anywhere in the country? If he does, he knows his countrymen too vaguely to pass judgment upon them.

He also reveals an egregiously mistaken idea regarding the number of Americans on the public payroll in proportion to the population. "I believe," he says, "our ratio is now about one in ten." The idea draws his scorn, as well it may: "One thinks very little of the sense of humor in a people who submit to such a ridiculous assumption—that it takes one out of every ten to govern and floor-manage and dry-nurse the other nine!" Before Mr. Nock unloosed his derision, he might have taken the trouble to find out whether the thing he proposed to deride was fact or fiction. He is accustomed to challenge conclusions based upon erroneous premises and to hold the person making a statement as responsible for his data as for his deductions. If one person in every ten in this country were on the public payroll—national, state, or local—the number would exceed 12,000,000. This is more than twice as many as were on the public payroll in 1918, when that payroll had been swollen by three million soldiers. Is there any reason for supposing that the number of Government employees has increased by several million since the disbanding of the soldiers—especially with the retrenchment of the past few years?

Mr. Nock finds some things to approve, even in his own countrymen. He has seldom seen an American whose table-manners were not up to standard; he thinks that in purely personal relations "there is a better ground of understanding between our high-life and our proletariat, at least in some sections of it, than there is in most countries," and his own American acquaintances are "simply unmatchable"—but without any influence whatever upon our society. Especially interesting are the jottings in which his penetration enables him to give something a surprising turn, as when he remarks that the peculiar richness of our language assists us in our tendency to indirectness of expression.

The paradox of his journal lies in its picture of a traveller who almost everywhere is offended with the human race and who nevertheless can be downright sentimental. Back in his own country, a friend gives him a drawing of the Monnaie on a rainy night, the opera-house which played a part in making him think Brussels "the most delightful place in the world." He knows that rain, but as he looks at the drawing and sees the murky lights of the Monnaie struggling through it, he "would gladly close out the whole Western Hemisphere at eight cents on the dollar, gold, if only" he might be there.

* *

Royal J. Davis is an editorial writer on the New York Evening Post, *a newspaper with which in the past Mr. Nock has been connected.*

Vigorous Humor

(Continued from first page)

place in Scotland, and the Scots are subjected to an intimate satire which only a native could bestow on them. But satire is only one ingredient of the humor in "Magnus Merriman"; much as there is of incidental satire, directed at nations, public personages, or characters in the story, the satire seems to be a by-product of the gusto which is the real quality of this novel. And Mr. Linklater's gusto embraces every kind of humor; he weaves the humor of situation with that of character so skilfully that the result cannot and should not be analyzed, but can and will be vastly enjoyed.

Even when, as occasionally happens, there is nothing going on at the moment, Mr. Linklater still gives the reader a good time. His strong, intelligent Saxon prose is equally invigorating whether he is discussing Magnus's state of mind or describing Edinburgh. One has constantly the sense of the author's enjoyment of life, an enjoyment keener for having dispensed with illusions, richer for avoiding the bitterness of disillusion. Magnus on the surface is a buffoon; he might easily have been either a misunderstood genius or a mountebank. Instead, he is human. And the novel on the surface is an extravaganza; the author's intelligence is so constantly evident as occasionally, but briefly, to make his characters seem like amusing marionettes. But their basis is in reality. Only at the end, when the hero is reduced to his essentials, do we understand what a very human novel "Magnus Merriman" is.

FROM THE JACKET OF "MAGNUS MERRIMAN"

The Irritant of His Time

SAMUEL JOHNSON. By Hugh Kingsmill. New York: The Viking Press. 1934. $2.75.

Reviewed by CHAUNCEY B. TINKER

IT is difficult to understand why Mr. Kingsmill has written this book. Strictly speaking, it contains nothing new, though much material recently collected by scholars has been laid under contribution. Very little is said, very little can be said, in so brief a book, of Johnson's vast contribution to English literature and to English scholarship. The object of the essay is apparently to discredit Boswell as a biographer. Many previous critics have despised him, and many more have deplored his vanity and his perpetual talk about himself and his private affairs; but it has remained for Mr. Kingsmill to assert that he is "deliberately dishonest," and "unscrupulous." These are amazing charges, and the attack upon the world's greatest biographer is not strengthened when one finds Mr. Kingsmill expressing a preference for Miss Burney's account of Johnson in her "Diary" or Mrs. Piozzi's "Anecdotes." The former presentation of Johnson is heightened and colored; the latter, inaccurate and biassed—facts which have been known to students of Johnson for a century and a half. Yet Mr. Kingsmill can assert in apparent sincerity that Mrs. Piozzi's little book gives us "a man," while Boswell's great record presents merely "a character." Such charges are too irresponsible ever seriously to be brought into court.

SAMUEL JOHNSON
From a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds

It is remarkable that the flow of publications about Johnson and Boswell goes on increasing from decade to decade. During the current winter we have seen the completion of Professor Pottle's "Boswell Papers" in eighteen volumes, and the issue, by the Clarendon Press, of a group of monographs by various hands entitled "Johnson's England." A revision of Hill's great edition of the Life is approaching completion, and Dr. Chapman is engaged on a definitive collection of Johnson's correspondence. Here indeed is evidence of Johnson's immortality.

That a man of such obvious weaknesses as Johnson's should prove to have so enduring a fascination for mankind is a thing to give us pause. Over a hundred years have elapsed since Macaulay drew attention to this phenomenon; yet there has been no dwindling in Johnson's bulky but impressive figure as it recedes into the mists of the past. Why is this? Of late there has been apparent a tendency to regard Johnson as being somehow the symbol and exponent of the age in which he lived; and he has been said to unite in himself the typical characteristics of the Englishman. But this view is hardly acceptable. Carlyle pointed out in 1840 that Johnson who "worshipped in the age of Voltaire" was certainly not typical of his century. And such Christian faith is no less unique than his stalwart opposition to the advance of democracy.

If we look critically into such assertions we shall hardly convince ourselves that Samuel Johnson was even a "typical Englishman"—if such a being may be said to exist. An Englishman is usually supposed to have a power (highly prized by himself and assiduously cultivated) of self-possession which ignores the possibility of rivalry or the need of correction. But though Johnson despised "foreigners"—those not born east of the Severn and south of the Tweed—he had no skill whatever in the art of self-control. He surrendered readily to every fleeting prejudice; he expressed with picturesque violence emotions which he regretted half an hour later; he never hid his affection for his friends, his dependants, his black servant, his dead wife, his college, or his cats. He begged the indulgent sympathy and the prayers of all who came into contact with him. Is this, one queries, "typically English"? If so, we must revise our notions of that remarkable people.

Nor is there any evidence that Johnson had the typical English love of sport, that one passion of the Englishman which is wholly unrepressed. For though Johnson was perhaps athletic in a spasmodic fashion, running races barefoot, swinging on gates, climbing trees, and rolling down hill, there is no hint of any regular attention to "exercise" or even to life in the open air. There is, so far as I know, no evidence that Johnson ever went a-fishing; and though he boasted that he could ride to hounds "as hard as anyone," there is no proof that he often did so. He was not seen at boxing matches or at race-courses. Squire Western would have considered him more of a milksop than Parson Supple. Is this indifference typically English?

Johnson described himself as a retired and uncourtly scholar, and such, indeed, he was, with no remarkable breadth of interests. To music and the plastic arts he was in general indifferent, though he could rouse himself to write a preface to Sir Joshua's "Discourses" or Dr. Burney's "History of Music." Politics bored him, save when he gave himself to the writing of such (perhaps regrettable) pamphlets as "The False Alarm" and "Taxation no Tyranny." Even the reading of history, but in particular conversation *about* history, bored him. When the conversation turned on the Punic Wars, he "divorced his mind and thought about Tom Thumb." But to poetry and to religion, to the failings and the fortunes of his friends he was never indifferent.

Upon the ordinary routine and the chaotic confusion of life Johnson brought to play a continuous stream of ideas. He drew the casual affairs of the day and the ordinary topics of conversation into a perspective in which new lights and shadows were suddenly revealed. He lent to the humdrum of human life a novelty that was sometimes splendid and sometimes terrifying, but which was always forceful and stimulating even when it was unreasonable. To speak in medical terms, he is the great irritant of his time. Yet in his power there is nothing that is aloof or saintly, for he clearly belongs to our world. He is doomed, like ourselves, to struggle with disease and disappointment, ever conscious of the lost opportunity and the unfulfilled task, with a loving heart which he was for ever disgracing by outbursts of spleen and bigotry, with a mind conscious of heroic powers yet a prey to melancholy and to a fitful purpose:—in a word, a genius, yet a fretful, sinful, and hungry creature like ourselves. Such is the enduring fascination of the man.

* *

Chauncey Brewster Tinker, Sterling professor of English at Yale University, is one of the outstanding authorities on Johnson and Boswell. Among his books are "Dr. Johnson and Fanny Burney," and "Young Boswell." He is the editor of "The Letters of James Boswell."

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The Saturday Review
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Profits of "Cussedness"

Mr. Schneider, in his article on Dreiser in last week's *Review*, maintains that the triumph over Victorian inhibitions and reticences in matters of sex was futile; the profits of that victory have accrued not to art and to truth, but to the exploiters of pornography — salacious periodicals, "art" magazines, burlesque shows, and depravity in general.

Was it futile? This break through the lines of reticence and hyprocrisy was certainly one of those major events which mark the end of a period and the beginning of something new. With entire fitness the old principle applies here; that it is better for many guilty to escape than for one innocent to have continued to suffer. The conflict between pornography and morals was not begun in our time, nor will it be ended: what is important in this change of front is the new freedom for writers with something to say and a genius for saying it, to enter upon every province of life, with no territory forbidden by convention. That gain outweighs the license given to the vicious minded. "Thou shalt" is more helpful to culture than "thou shalt not," and no art was ever built up on suppressions.

But the innate "cussedness" of human nature to which Elmer Davis refers in his review of Professor Niebuhr's book, also in last week's *Review*, is inextinguishable here as elsewhere. It is "cussedness" that makes the munition maker an instigator of war if he can get his price; it is "cussedness" that defeats attempt after attempt to make the city a decent place to live in; it is "cussedness" that makes capitalism unworkable and communism and fascism tyrannies. And it is "cussedness" that takes advantage of the end of sexual reticence to peddle printed dirt in the streets.

But why be defeatist about it? This particular kind of original sin is now out in the open, and both reader and critic can form their own judgments as to whether a book is really dirty without having to make equivocal concessions to the prudes.

When Lowell attacked the indecent there was a faint smell of hypocrisy in the air. One felt that Whitman shocked him because he had never dared distinguish between the honest instincts of human nature, his own included, and the salacious. Unwilling to admit the full range of his own emotions into literature, his attack on what he called immorality was futile because his own sexual morality was a convention. The naughtiness of the later nineties, like the verbal impudence of Ezra Pound, or the *doubles entendres* of Cabell, was not so much indecency as a protest against such prudery, the irrepressible sticking out its tongue at the respectable. We were all ill at ease in those days, since we had to defend a good deal of adolescent nastiness because we knew that it was a symptom of a desire to break down a taboo. In the same way, one gave a grudging loyalty to the intolerable preciosity of the *fin de siècle* because it was a protest against the cheap ugliness of current journalistic prose.

Today, when the reader of sensitive spirit must feel that the sexual organs themselves have been given tongues, one at least is enabled to make free and responsible judgments between the literature of truth and the literature of salaciousness. No court will ever decide this matter to permanent satisfaction; no government will enforce standards without the danger of such horrid results as one finds in Ireland and in Germany. It is for the reader to decide whether a fornication is described because it is a fornication or because it is an indispensable part of the imaginative creation of a life worth imagining. Such decisions will make our new mores. (See in this connection Hervey Allen's letter on this page.)

But "cussedness" falls short of a full explanation of these results of taking the lid off reticence. Honest indecency, some maintain, is good for the mechanized man that we all dangerously tend to become. Nudity for its own sake, even pornography for its own sake, probably never hurt any mature and balanced personality. Unfortunately a frightening percentage of our population is immature emotionally and unbalanced in intellect, which raises difficulties not to be dealt with here. However this may be, no real justification can be argued for the exploiting of the sexual instinct, where the purpose is clearly not art or truth or protest but making money. That way lies true salaciousness, and worse than salaciousness. No matter how honest the emotion, the exploiters have a way of making it vicious, and we make no distinction here between sexualism exploited for profit and the false idea of life played up in the movies. Of the two the latter is probably more dangerous. Vulgarizing for profit is a social damage against which the state has a right to protect itself, especially when the harm is done to the impressionable minds of youth. But the state has not taken action in any intelligent way because the state has made profit sacred. In the widespread exploitation of sexualism of which Mr. Schneider complains, both morals and art are out of court, except as frames of reference. This is a disease of the profit-making system, an inflammation of the profit-making motive. The idea that what pays must somehow be right is deep in the core of our capitalist civilization. We have forgotten how specialized is the principle of private profits. We remember only its immense apparent success, especially in this continent. Our fabric of laws protects it, our own instincts protect it. If there is danger in the new freedom, it is because the "cussedness" of human nature is exploiting this freedom, and there is no defence against this exploitation except to reconsider the economic basis upon which our sense of right and wrong in these matters is based. As in everything one touches in discussion today such a searching question points toward a single answer, which—one speaks tentatively, not prophetically—is neither communism, nor fascism, nor even socialism, which are only names for experiments tried elsewhere or theories never brought to earth, but a redefining of *human* values, and a rigorous and ruthless attempt to make profits profitable for the social good—and for art—and for the full life, which is a great deal more important than decency as the prudish have defined it.

Superannuated Professors Literary Awakening in Harvard—a Cambridge scout reports that the Harvard *Advocate* regrets the "balderdash and hogwash poured out weekly in such papers as the *Saturday Review* by superannuated professors whose knowledge of literature stops with Hardy." Alas, the twenties still exercise their baneful influence, for here is the once well-known diction of Ezra Pound on the lips of youth. Ten years from now the *Advocate* will stumble upon the Marxian dialectic as applied to lyric poetry! More in sorrow than in anger we made a statistical survey of reviewers in the last two numbers of the *Review*. The score stands ten professors, active or ex, forty-four non-academic reviewers. Average age of the professors, say thirty-eight, which one supposes does seem hopelessly old to an undergraduate, especially if there has been a difference of opinion as to a review or a question on an examination paper.

"TWO MORE POEMS AND A SHORT SHORT-STORY AND WE'LL HAVE THAT LITTLE PLACE IN TUDOR CITY."

To the Editor: *Hervey Allen Replies to Monsignor Lavelle*

"Anthony" and Censorship

SIR:—The letter which follows was given last week to the Associated Press, but I think has been printed only in part.

Seldom has so purely personal and wrongly aimed a statement found its way into the press as that recently credited to Monsignor Lavelle, of St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York. Mgr. Lavelle's action in setting himself up as the moral censor of modern literature is typical rather of the isolated crusades led by ignorant zealots of certain puritanical sects than of the liberal and understanding attitude to be expected from, and usually to be found in a great Catholic tradition.

In particular, his choice of "Anthony Adverse" as an example of vice in modern literature can only be described as amazingly misdirected. It is true that certain experiences in the life of Anthony Adverse are frankly described in the novel, but they are so treated for the sole purpose of making real and so doubly understandable, the human difficulties to be overcome in the development of the hero's moral character.

Now Mgr. Lavelle, according to his own statement to the press, "read only a few pages and threw the book into the furnace." It is quite evident therefore, if Mgr. Lavelle's statement was correctly quoted, that he could have had no adequate idea whatever as to the nature of the contents of the book which he so outrageously denounced. He could not even have known what it is really about. Burning a book without reading it is one of the strangest methods of becoming acquainted with the moral or immoral significance of its pages that anyone has ever heard of. Does Mgr. Lavelle really intend to accuse the public at large of being interested in "Anthony Adverse" because as he asserts, without having read it, the book contains "descriptions of vice"? If so, he underestimates the ethical understanding of the intelligent reading public.

I can scarcely believe that Mgr. Lavelle really intended to convey the impression that he as the head of a great metropolitan parish could do no better than to assume the old-fashioned role of Anthony Comstock and the Watch and Ward Society when other ministers of the Gospel, rabbis, and editors of religious journals, some of them of his own faith, have been drawing material from the very novel which he denounced, for sermons, editorials, articles, and reviews.

Must I believe that those who claim that they have found a strong religious and moral theme in the book are all mistaken and that Mgr. Lavelle is the only one who is right?

Since a great many of the incidents in "Anthony Adverse" deal with material taken from the lives of saints and missionaries, some of them martyrs for the Roman Catholic faith, it is more than unusually unfortunate that, possibly in order to obtain publicity for his crusade against obscenity in modern literature, Mgr. Lavelle should have settled upon one of the few pieces of popular fiction published in recent times which lays prime stress upon the necessity for religion in modern life.

HERVEY ALLEN.

Miami, Fla.

Unemployed Writers Association

SIR:—This to advise you of the organization of the Unemployed Writers Association, 146 Macdougal St., New York, for the purpose of forcing through a project for writers in this national economic emergency, and bettering the condition of the writer in his present extremity. We have written everyone, including the President, that we stand for the recognition of the profession of writing by the government, the right to a secure existence *as writers*, [and] work or wages for *all* unemployed writers. . . .

Since our formation we have outlined a project which would enable the local CWA, CWS, ABC, or XYZ to start immediately setting authors to work—if there were money; we have demanded of Harry L. Hopkins that he ask Congress for the money, although the bureaucrats below may not have communicated this to him as yet; and we have exacted the promise from Miss Gosselin in New York that 250 writers will immediately receive work when the money comes. We have been steadily registering and classifying writers of all kinds, and now have 500, half of which are already registered with CWA. A few of the provisions of our project are:—a government subsidized printing house to distribute authors' work free to libraries, museums, etc.; bureaus for translating foreign newspapers, lecturing for poets, novelists, etc.; a colony or camp for unemployed writers in the summer.

We are also supporting such projects as that of the Authors' League for 500 writers until May 1, etc., although our own project is more inclusive. . . . But so far we have been unable to advance very far, except in sending delegations to the authorities.

ROBERT WHITCOMB.

New York City.

The Saturday Review recommends

This Group of Current Books:

IN SIGHT OF EDEN. By ROGER VERCEL. *Harcourt, Brace.* A story of seamen and the frozen North.

ROBERT E. LEE. By ROBERT W. WINSTON. *Morrow.* A biography that is at the same time a history of the Civil War period.

SENSE AND POETRY. By JOHN H. A. ANGUS. *Yale University Press.* Essays on contemporary verse.

This Less Recent Book:

STICKS AND STONES. By LEWIS MUMFORD. *Norton.* A study of American architecture now issued in a new edition.

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A Dramatic Story of the Greenland Coast

IN SIGHT OF EDEN. By Roger Vercel. Translated by Alvah C. Bessie. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company. 1934. $2.50.

Reviewed by William Doerflinger

THIS distinguished sea novel, first winner of the America-France Award, the American counterpart of the Prix Femina, is a work possessing the biting drive and force of its own Arctic gales which sweep unimpeded from the realms of bright ice which cap the world. A tale of Breton fishermen who seek their catch on the coast of Greenland in a year when the cod, "sick of the warm Newfoundland waters, had gone north toward the Pole and would be found abundant in Davis Strait," it should become memorable, for its beauty and power, to all who love sincere romantic realism.

Far to the northward of the crowded Banks of Newfoundland and Labrador, the steamships *Tenax* and *Borea,* both of Boulogne, find themselves in silent seas which are the sailing ground only of the two fishing vessels and of the great bergs which crash down ways of ice from the glacial heights of Greenland and Baffin Land. The *Tenax* is manned by eighty sailormen, against whose rugged group psychology the personalities of individuals emerge in elemental drama—Launay, the irresolute young mate; Jalibot, the veteran salter; Bouju, the ship's baker, a lubber at grips with the sea; Chuinard, the "sea lawyer." Captain Rochard of the *Tenax* and Captain Ferrier of the *Borea* are fast friends, but in these lonely seas they are swept apart by a current flowing from Brittany, a current of longing, which carries with it the image of Rochard's wife Andrée, the absent wife whom one comes to know intimately through Rochard's dreams and, later, his shattering fears.

The story and its background are one, whether in passages treating of the physical vicissitudes of the ship and her company, or in those which are concerned with "the haunting visions that blow unchecked and undiverted upon lonely sailors like the wind over an open deck." Reading the book, one experiences the voyage of the *Tenax* from sailing day to the time when the drama of that summer reaches its close and the field ice locks the sea. Reality is vivid in all these scenes, radiant with colors at sea and on the forbidden emerald slopes of Greenland, dark with charging snow and lashing water, mystic with the gleam of strangely tinted skies reflected in mountains of crystal which fringe a virgin continent. M. Vercel's extremely simple, bold handling of the gigantic admirably achieves the feat of imparting vast sea-scapes to the visual imagination — and best of all he keeps them whole, as they are in their impact on the physical eye.

This is a rare accomplishment in writings which deal with the sea, or, indeed, with nature in any of its vaster aspects. Too often the tendency is toward vivisection of the scene, which perishes and is left to be exhibited in catalogued fragments. M. Vercel grasps everything together, often capturing a complex impression in a single striking metaphor, always compounding details into a unity which is the scene. For example—

> To the west, thirty miles off the invisible coasts, the *Tenax* in turn encountered the ice-floe. Forward, the sea was white. The ice, seen from the bridge or even the crow's nest, lay without a flaw, a long platform rising three feet above the level of the calm sea. Here and there enormous icebergs lay caught, and the air above the sea was pale as silver.

The dialogue, which in the original French is at times couched in practically untranslatable Breton slang, may perhaps be more striking in that idiom. But Mr. Bessie, the translator, has done a job worthy of the book, and Mr. Rockwell Kent's woodcuts add wonderfully well to the unfailing realness of the whole.

ROCKWELL KENT'S FRONTISPIECE
From "In Sight of Eden"

Mr. Powys's World of Sleep Walkers

WEYMOUTH SANDS. By John Cowper Powys. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1934. $3.

Reviewed by Ernest Sutherland Bates

THERE must be something about the atmosphere of Devonshire that drives men mad. Even Thomas Hardy was coerced by it into accepting the unrealistic conception of a malign fate that intervenes to thwart the wills of men through the most unlikely accidents. For Mr. Powys, fate is even more malignantly pervasive, entering into the inner natures of men to make them intrinsically self-defeating. His characters are embodiments of "the great erotic force that creates the world" and that at the same time condemns its instruments to obtain no joy from their eroticism. Sex acts upon them like an "acrid drug," and their sex experiences are violent and grim. Most of the characters have strongly mystical leanings in which they are abetted by the author; they are aware of invisible entities, astral bodies, and mysterious emanations all around them. Even one of the lesser mystics in the book can get such impressions as the following from a mere pair of human hands:

> His hands seemed to her like fir-tree tops, like the indignant feathers of swans, like huge sea-weeds from the bottom of the sea, like floating zenith-clouds, like wind-signals on the White Nose, like the weather-cock on the top of St. John's, like sea-gulls on Hardy's Monument, like the turning chimney-tops of Sark House before she had entered it, like the revolution of the Portland Bill searchlight that shone through the windows of Last House.

When so slight an action as the waggling of a man's fingers can unloose such a cascade of words as this, one can see how small a chance the characters have of ever dominating the author's style by even the most heroic deeds. But, as a matter of fact, the people in "Weymouth Sands" are incapable of deeds of any kind. They have the emotions of giants and the behavior of pigmies. A kind of paralysis seems to have overtaken the author's fancy, so far as action is concerned, without at all affecting his verbal fluency. His characters may plot and plan and talk about murder or suicide, but a few trivial seductions are all that they can accomplish. The distaste for action has grown upon Mr. Powys from work to work until this latest volume has the quality of a nightmare in which the movement of a hand or foot requires the labor of a Hercules.

The Weymouth Chamber of Commerce will hardly enroll Mr. Powys as a member because of his selecting their sunny watering-place on the English Channel as the scene of his dark novel. A more sombre watering-place was never yet depicted. In fact, the strange characters of the book seem to have wandered into their modern setting somnambularly from some region outside of space and time. And certainly the characters in the book—whether inside or outside of the mad-house matters not—will never be discovered in Weymouth or elsewhere on land or sea. They belong in a lurid world of their own, as literary as Poe's for all their lavish background of nature.

English School Life

BLOODY MARY'S. By Goeffrey Dennis. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1934. $2.50.

EXCURSION TO LILLIPUT. By Lewis Gibbs. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co. 1934. $2.

Reviewed by Stanley Went

HERE are two novels of English school life, both of them significant as symptoms of social revolution, and the former an important addition to the list of well-conceived and well-written novels for which Mr. Dennis has won an enviable reputation.

In the past a story of English school life has meant, almost invariably, only one thing—a tale in the legitimate line of succession from "Tom Brown's School Days"; so much so that a foreigner, glancing over a library of English school stories, might have been pardoned for inquiring whether any type of secondary education was obtainable in England save that afforded by the "public schools"—by Eton, Harrow, Winchester, Rugby, and the rest. It was a splendid tradition that Arnold set and Hughes immortalized at Rugby, and on the whole it has been splendidly maintained.

Is the public school of Arnold's tradition passing? Has it served its turn? Probably not; but undoubtedly its influence and importance have diminished. Only the other day the London *Times* published an article from its university correspondent in which he half jocularly remarked that a public-school education in these days was almost a handicap at Oxford, so greatly had undergraduates coming from grammar schools and the great secondary day-schools increased in numbers and influence. When the writer was at Oxford, thirty years ago, the boot was altogether on the other leg. Then the presumption was all in favor of the public-school man, and while the handicap of day-school antecedents could be easily overcome, it nevertheless existed.

A WOOLLCOTT CARICATURE
By Gluyas Williams

Now the wheel seems to have made its full turning, and these two novels are symptomatic of the revolution; for the schools described are both of them day schools. Mr. Gibbs's story is not important, except as a symptom. It is a detailed description of one day in the life of a small boy. It is extremely well written and though it is labeled a novel, it has sociological value as a case study.

"Bloody Mary's" is largely autobiographical, the story of the author's school days thirty years ago at a school in Yorkshire, one of those ancient foundations connected with the cathedral which had a rebirth with the educational reforms of the latter half of the nineteenth century. In the case of Queen Mary's School the resuscitation proved short-lived, and not the least attractive feature of the book is the touching story of the gradual decline of the old foundation in face of competition from the modern "Municipal Secondary School" at a nearby seaside resort.

The sympathetic quality of this longish book is not to be conveyed in a review. It owes most, perhaps, to the author's admirable English style, but hardly less to his success in mixing, as it were, the thoughts, emotions, and adventures of his own boyhood in the crucible of his mature man's mind. From the point of view of middle age he analyzes the character of the boy that he remembers, and he appears to do it with absolute detachment, recognizing the good and freely admitting the bad. And what he does for himself, he does also for his schoolfellows and his masters. In particular, the headmaster, nicknamed "Oom Paul" when the Boer War came along, is an extraordinary, almost incredible character, sadistic yet lovable, and in the main just, a survival into the first days of the twentieth century of an early nineteenth century type. The story is detailed, yet it never ceases to progress, from its start on the eighth birthday of the hero, to the *lacrimæ rerum* of the conclusion when the robustious days at Bloody Mary's have given place to the coeducational refinements of the new Municipal Secondary School:

> There was no flogging, and no bullying, and no drill. There were mistresses, in the favour of at least one of whom I did almost become a veritable Pet Pig; there were girls, who lent a new piquancy to the day's doings. They gave me a scholarship; I did very well; I was never unhappy there. We had quite good times. It was a mild and model school.
>
> But I preferred Bloody Mary's. When I speak of my school days I mean those with her.

Juice of the Tenderized Prune

(*Continued from first page*)

suppressed exhibitionistic tendency, worse than his idiosyncratic injustice to better men than himself. It is this. He can write straightforward, cleanly, hard-hitting English, yet never was there such a crawling slave of the cliché. Not since writing began have there been so many quirks dependent on a vague and inapposite allusiveness. All of us who are writers in haste, endeavor to achieve a spurious brightness by manufacturing mosaics of shop-worn phrases that have done a better duty in nobler connections. It ill becomes the woman taken in adultery to throw the first stone. But it ought to be stopped. Mr. Woollcott is among the most criminal of literary gangsters in this connection.

The reason is easy to find. It is his audience. He writes for the imperfectly educated, for the sort of person who has enjoyed every advantage, but complains about highbrows when an Italian lady quotes Dante. Such persons have vague half-memories of jewels five words long, that on the stretched forefinger of all time sparkle forever. When they hear phrases of this kind they feel a vague half-thrill of half-recognition, and a conscious pleasure in seeing something good put to base uses. The hand which thus tickles the cockles of Park Avenue, Suburbia, and our reading-circle in Massachusetts is presently subdued to the base stuff it works in.

But it is sad that an able and ready writer should have injured his own vigorous, pleasing, and natural style. The stale catchword, the metallic cliché, the cant phrase of a metropolitan (and as they would put it) sophisticated clique, do infinite wrong to a writer who, in spite of being a critic and in spite of constant association with others just like him, retains traces of life and originality. To conclude:

> It's the kind of a book that would please Jimmy Walker,
> There's much spurious swank and much tittle and tattle.
> It was made for palookas who love the *New Yalker,*
> Ed Wynn, Groucho Marx and inferior cattle. . . .
> And I haven't a doubt that he's perfectly charming
> And that socially he's uncommonly nice,
> That his manners are finished and poised and disarming,
> And that he won't relish this final advice,—
> That his book would be better were it not so ungentle,
> The flattery so fulsome, the jests so jejune,
> Were it not so sadistic, or so sentimental,
> Were it less like the juice of the tenderized prune.

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An Honest Portrait

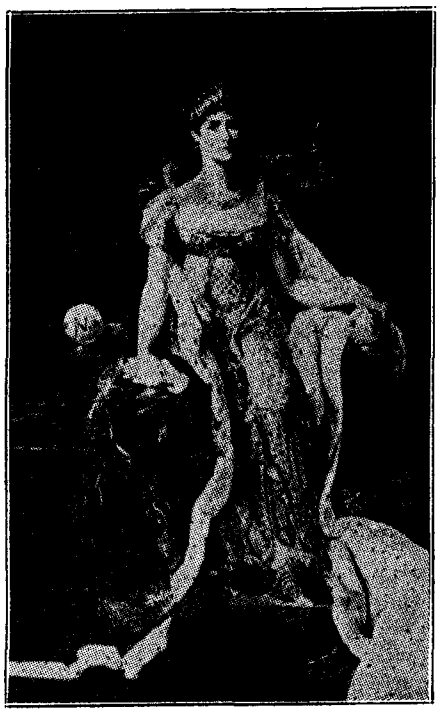
JOSEPHINE, WIFE OF NAPOLEON. By E. A. Rheinhardt. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1934. $3.

Reviewed by CHARLES DAVID ABBOTT

THERE is a legend about Josephine to suit every taste. She was the elegant aristocrat to whom Bonaparte owed his first political successes and his manners; she was the wanton whose infidelities revolted the natural innocence of her husband; she was the queenly arbiter of fashions whose originality created the tone of the Empire period; and a hundred other roles she played, each dependent upon the whim, the political bias, or the affection of each legend's sponsor. She has served as the subject of too many lyric and adulatory biographies; she has been the scapegoat of too many apologists for other people; and never, until now, has she received the justice which is without flattery and without rancor.

Mr. Rheinhardt has a passion for truth, and in presenting Josephine he has allowed nothing to prejudice him either for or against her. He has dug out the facts—a difficult but not impossible undertaking, in the face of all the legends—and these facts he has skilfully welded together into a narrative that is rapid and clear, filled with details and yet not obstructed by them. The facts alone, however, are not enough in the case of Josephine. For a proper understanding both of her personality and of her place in the events of the Revolution and the Empire, the biographer must possess an unusual power of analysis and an ability to see through the facts into the reasons that lie behind them and the temperament that evolved them. This is a task for a psychologist who is not obsessed by pedantic and rigid theories of sex, a task for which Mr. Rheinhardt is ideally equipped. A native of Vienna, learned in that city's psychoanalytical knowledge, he is at bottom a poet who uses the Freudian method neither to distort a character nor to point a thesis, but as a means to honest understanding.

The zealous care and deliberate thought which he has expended upon Josephine have been more than rewarded, for he has produced a biography of permanent interest, a sincere and graphic study of a woman whose life was, by chance, of considerable importance but who never realized the greatness of her own position. Young, ignorant, not even pretty or very well-born, she came from Martinique to an unfortunate marriage in Paris. Her resilience carried her through the disaster of this marriage and the catastrophe of the Revolution, and from experience she learned to know her own talents which were entirely social and extremely of the surface. She had the wit, however, to cultivate them, and in the end they brought to her Napoleon, whom she married unwillingly, mainly because she feared that her advancing years would make a later and better marriage impossible. Napoleon's passionate devotion she neither wanted nor understood; it distressed her, and she came to respect her husband only after her own coldness and wilfulness had caused it to subside. Then in the days of imperial glory she enjoyed the splendor and the grandeur. She had at last the opportunity to indulge her most pleasant vice, extravagance. But it was a personal extravagance; it played no part in affairs of state, and benefited no one except herself and the merchants. She shared Napoleon's throne, but took no part in the direction of events and never comprehended the possible power of her position. Posterity has idealized or reviled her, quite without reason; she deserved neither the praise nor the blame. She was, as Mr. Rheinhardt has so brilliantly and painstakingly shown, an ordinary woman with a social talent, unconsciously important, but harmless.



THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE
Painting by Guillaume Lethière

Charles David Abbott is a member of the department of history at the University of Colorado.

Thump—Throb—Thump—Throb

THE SHADOW BEFORE. By William Rollins Jr. New York: Robert M. McBride & Co. 1934. $2.50.

Reviewed by SELDEN RODMAN

SINCE the publication of James Joyce's "Ulysses" in 1922 there has been a procession of intricately constructed novels characterized by the technique of broken narrative and the exploration of the subconscious.

With material far more potentially epic than that of Halper's "Union Square," and with a steadier hand, William Rollins Jr. has taken a typical mill-town at strike-time and has constructed a powerful and gripping novel in this technical tradition. The long list of testimonials on the slip-cover must nettle the free spirit of many a reader (they certainly impel the reviewer to murderous intent!) but the book cannot be denied.

The author has taken a cross-section of the society of Fullerton: the Jewish mill-owner, correctly invisible behind the scenes; the Puritan middle-class super who has "made good," his nostalgic wife and neurotically aspiring but weak daughter; the harassed, sensation-seeking son of the owner, plagued from the start by the double handicap of wealth and race; Micky, the fighting Irish girl, torn between her love for Ramon the scab and her loyalty to the great cause; Marvin, the idealist, the organizer. On the fringes are the "liberal" lawyers, romantic, "Socialistic" young girls of the leisure class, righteous editorial writers, brutal vigilantes, and cops. In the background the desperate workers, pitted against the whole community, the whole world, first:

> tails between their legs; going back to "their" machines, the machines they belonged to according to the bosses . . . until they got too old or got hurt, when they'd be unchained and chucked away, and new fellows and girls chained to them.

—and then suddenly with the strike, to this "drab underside of the city, their comings and goings unnoticed, never News, never counting, just the dark gloomy props that held up an unaware society":

> Like a tropic sun rising on arctic land, came an unexpected blossoming. Pool-room boys picketed, made speeches . . . worked all day for nothing. . . Timid alien mothers, of the shawl-clutched-around-the-chin type, threw off the shawls and came out . . . to get arrested.

Through the dramatic narrative of the novel, picketing, pitched battles, tense court-room scenes, incendiarism,—a series of sinister motives punctuate the action and the thoughts of everyone:

thump throb; *thump* throb

the voice of the factory in the distance; or inside, CLAMP THEM ON AND SNAP THEM OFF, CLAMPING THEM OFF AND SNAPPING THEM OFF; or the daughter of the super, like a character in "The Three Sisters," yearning for the city but unable to leave the house.

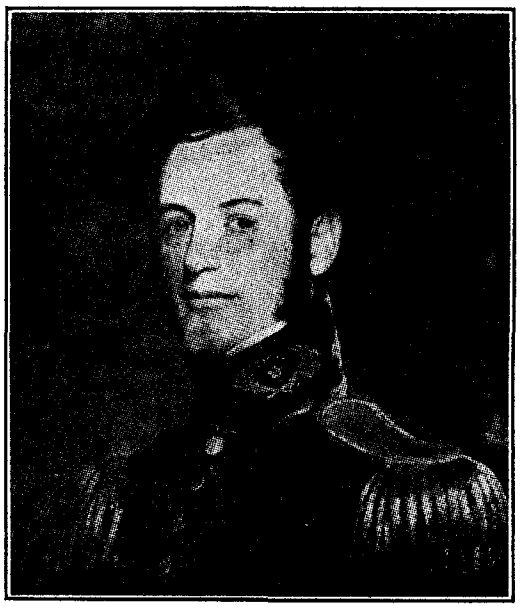
Sometimes the technique verges on the melodramatic and the reader becomes aware of it, but more often his heart will pound to the living suspense and imagination of the author, as these real, very real, characters move to their destinies.

The Southern Point of View

ROBERT E. LEE. By Robert W. Winston. New York: William Morrow & Company. 1934. $4.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE

JUDGE ROBERT WATSON WINSTON, a member of the North Carolina Supreme Court, and for years a director and active member of the North Carolina Historical Society, who has written, according to his "Who's Who" report, many books "interpreting the South to the nation, and the nation to the South," has done his country a signal service in contributing this biography to the literature of understanding and reconciliation. His service is more than a scholar's service. For this Life of General Lee is more than a biography. It is a painstaking, unimpassioned presentation of the Southern point of view of the Civil War. That war left scars and hatreds more than a generation after it had passed; scars and hatreds that were revealed by the very designation of the conflict when the North called it "the War of the Rebellion," and the South called it the "War Between the States." It is still the War Between the States in the South today, nearly seventy years after Appomattox.



LEE AT TWENTY-EIGHT

Judge Winston's biography of Lee is written so dispassionately, so honestly, with such kind candor that it may well be called the first and, from certain aspects, the best of the later literary endeavors to record from the Southern point of view the four year struggle of the South for what it earnestly believed, then, was its freedom. This record, of course, is circumscribed by being dramatized around General Lee, but its very limitations broaden it, for Lee himself was one of the broad and liberal leaders of his people and his time. A biography of Jefferson Davis, however fair, could not have presented the Southern case so convincingly as this story of the great Southern military hero.

Probably Lee will survive in American history as a military hero, though he is, of course, something more than that. He is the ideal Southern gentleman—a man of education and parts; a man of sophistication, broad in his tolerances, wise in his judgments, far-seeing in his vision, and without self-seeking in his aims and ambitions. Probably no more selfless man has ever appeared in American public life than Robert E. Lee. He emerges from this book as a man, despite the fact that 275 of its more than 400 pages are devoted to his career as a soldier, that is, to the four years between '61 and '65. These 275 pages of military history are probably the ultimate record of the Southern military struggle under Lee for independence. It may be the last of a large library of military histories written from each side of the conflict;—much of it worthless; nearly all of it devoted to propaganda for some general, and no small part of it badly ex parte memories of, fervid apologies for, elaborate explanations of the military records of heroes now all but forgotten—heroes of both armies. As they came out in the seventies, eighties, and early nineties—these stories of the generals published either as memoirs or as family biographies—what an uproar greeted each book. Clamor and contention were aroused by each and every general's story and the tumult was not entirely from his sectional opponents. Criticism of General Grant, General Sherman, General McClellan, or General Hancock in the North and backbiting of General Gordon or General Longstreet in the South was just as fierce as it was on the other side of Mason's and Dixon's line. A whole literature of regional polemics directed at its own heroes rose on both sides of the Ohio River, and while the soldiers of the Civil War lived, how it raged! It died down as death came to the veterans. And now the storm is over. The gashes the war made in our national life are fairly well healed and this vast bulk of books and pamphlets lies forgotten and dusty.

It was a picturesque era which followed the Civil War; picturesque in its writing because the writing was highly emotionalized and because its emotions never were adequately expressed in its contemporary writing. The South, of course, was crippled. Its young men, who might have expressed its rancor and anguish at the humiliation put upon the South by reconstruction, died in the war. The flower of the South went down in Lee's battles. A few young men, born in the late forties and early fifties, too late to get into the war, survived but unless they came north, few of them had perspective upon the great struggle or its aftermath. They were too close at hand to describe it intelligently. So when they wrote, the few who did write, Harry Stillwell Edwards, Joel Chandler Harris, F. Hopkinson Smith, Thomas Nelson Page, George W. Cable, they wrote sentimentally of the Old South, the ideal South before the war between the states. They seemed to reflect to the world no conception of the stark and terrible realities through which the South was living during the days of the sixties and seventies. Sometimes a bitter writer came like Thomas Dickson, Albion W. Tourgee, but he lacked skill. His emotions got the better of him. He became a controversialist and his work is interesting now merely as a museum piece.

In the north conditions were not materially better. The writing of that period so far as it referred to the Civil War and reconstruction, was pretty bad. It was not much above the "Bigelow Papers" and Petroleum V. Nasby. And all the while on both sides of the Mason and Dixon Line, bitterness rankled. The appearance of a book like Grant's "Memoirs" was the signal of a whopping row, a row in the north among Grant's rivals and his enemies and a row all through the South sponsored by the friends of the various generals whom Grant encountered.

Today the record seems scarcely worth making. This biography of General Lee is fair to General Grant. It is adequately critical of Lee's military associates. Yet the book is obviously an attempt to tell an unbiased tale. But this generation sees no need for bias. The ancient wrath has cooled. So to the grandchildren of the veterans of the sixties, this story may seem to be painfully meticulous.

Judge Winston has done a fine piece of work. He has made one of the two or three important figures of a terrible time live for another day. One realizes after reading this book, the military greatness of Robert E. Lee. But also one feels his greatness as a man. Lee the gentleman, might be stressed more than the author stresses it. He was so much more than Grant outside of battle and of war's alarms, that it seems a pity that Lee's human qualities might not be set down more elaborately with greater artistry so that the man might overshadow the general.

Nevertheless this is mere carping. Judge Winston's story of Lee is a good story, well worth reading.

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The Bowling Green

I HAVE remarked on the fact that one does not find in the dictionaries the word *leotard,* in familiar use in the theatre as the name of a sort of jerkin or one-piece garment worn for chorus rehearsals. Now, in rereading Jules Verne, I get a clue as to its origin. Passepartout, the valet of Phileas Fogg in *Around the World in* 80 *Days,* remarks that in his youth he was a circus-rider, "when I used to vault like Leotard." So I take it that the garment was named for some famous acrobat.

Speaking of *Around the World in Eighty Days,* surely one of the most permanent books of the nineteenth century, it seems to have been fairly well translated in the familiar version except for one obvious error. Great Salt Lake is spoken of as "three miles eight hundred feet above the sea." Is this perhaps a mistranslation for three *thousand* eight hundred? I don't remember the altitude of Salt Lake, but the Union Pacific timetable, my authority on all such matters, gives Ogden as 4298 feet. Why doesn't the Union Pacific put a copy of the book in each of its club-cars? The description of Phileas Fogg's journey on the Overland Limited in 1872 is fascinating reading for the traveler of today.

Villainy on the Flute

Sir:—Another book which richly deserves re-entry into print is E. F. Benson's "The Luck of the Vails," which Appleton published here in 1901. It was considerably in advance of its time. As a combination of a corking mystery yarn and a novel of manners it ranks with A. A. Milne's "The Red House Mystery." Among the considerable debts I owe E. Nesbit is that she put me on its trail. (She might very possibly have read "The Red House Mystery," since it was published before her death in 1924, and it probably gave her a nostalgic twinge, thinking of her own Red House, Well Hall, her Kent home which she introduced so often into her novels besides the one of that name, and which she struggled so gallantly to maintain). Mabel, the housekeeper's niece in "The Enchanted Castle" (reissued by Coward-McCann last fall) had read it, and it sent her hunting for secret passages. (One of the boys in "The Luck" announced he felt yew-hedgy, and discovered a tunnel in the middle of the overgrown hedge). When I came to New York in 1917 I also went hunting, for "The Luck," in second-hand bookstores, and have turned up several copies, one of which I generously presented to Medium Quercus the other day. Perhaps he'd lend it to you. The Luck was a richly jewelled cup, for the possession of which a villainous great-uncle (who whenever contemplating villainy played his flute) sent the Vail heir through various ordeals of frost, flood, and fire.

And speaking of "The Lost Special," I'm lucky enough to own a copy of the American edition of the collection of Doyle's stories, one of his finest, in which it first appeared. ("Round the Fire Stories.") McClure Phillips did it up to the queen's taste. Do you remember the frontispiece, which accompanied that curdling yarn, "The Leather Funnel," and illustrated it only too vividly? It pictured a dream in which the extraordinary question, several buckets of it, was being administered to the Marquise de Brinvilliers.

Earle F. Walbridge.

Sherlock Holmes's Religion

Sir:—A recent discussion of Holmes's religious tendencies in the Bowling Green leads me to suggest that in spite of Sherlock's unfortunate encounter with Victor Trevor's bull terrier, a hidden stratum of religious feeling outcrops occasionally.

A few instances occur to me; others may be found by thorough searching. In the "Adventure of the Naval Treaty," Holmes makes a pointed reference to Deity, when, in discoursing on the beauty and purpose of the rose, he speaks of "the goodness of Providence." A strong religious feeling is manifested in the "Adventure of the Cardboard Box," when he says: "else our universe is ruled by chance, which is unthinkable." Our last words from Holmes carry a message of religious significance. In the last paragraph of "His Last Bow" occurs the prophetic reference to "God's own wind." In reading of the solution of Porlock's cypher message in the "Valley of Fear," one suspects a Bible is close at hand.

Mr. Vincent Starrett, in his recent book, notes that many of the problems repeat themselves. In addition to the instances given by Mr. Starrett, one may point out that the "Red Headed League," and the "Three Garridebs" seem to be poured in the same mould. Also the curious tendon nicking practiced in "Silver Blaze" is repeated in the "Sussex Vampire."

Horace Reynolds Stahl.
of the Baker Street Irregulars.
Desloge, Missouri.

The Confederate Prayer Book

Sir: —Anent your mention of the Church of England prayer book, and the several changes and revisions that have taken place from time to time, there is one rare edition of the Book of Common Prayer that deserves special mention.

In 1863, there was printed an edition of the Book of Common Prayer by G. E. Eyre and W. Spottiswoode, London, England, for J. W. Randolph, Richmond, Va. In this edition, the usual prayer for The President of the United States was changed to read, ". . . thy servant, The President of the *Confederate* States and all in Civil Authority." The prayer for Congress was changed to read, ". . . as for the people of these *Confederate* States in general . . ."

This edition of the Book of Common Prayer was a part of the cargo of the Anglo-Rebel blockade runner "Minna," captured off Wilmington, N. C., December 6, 1863, by the United States dispatch ship "Circassian."

S. A. Hand.
Associate Editor, American Machinist.
Nassawadox, Virginia.

Santayana and a Red Pencil

Sir:—Santayana's *Character and Opinion in the United States* is one of the most thwarting books I've read. I went through it last fall, a first reading, with a red pencil and a typically receptive undergraduate mind. I was prepared to be convinced. And through the first two chapters I was, agreeably so. But in the chapters on James and Royce, and particularly in the one on *Later Speculations,* there was a wrongness that I could not explain. Towards the last of the book I realized that I had been delighting, consciously, with multitudinous red underlinings, in the way Mr. Santayana was saying things and disagreeing subconsciously (for he is a Very Great Man) but heartily (for I am quite strong-minded for an undergraduate) with most of *what* he said, though I couldn't discover *why* I disagreed.

Mr. Santayana admits in his preface "that other people's idea of a man is apt to be a better expression of their nature than of his." And of course, the ever-quotable Pope has a pair of lines pertinent and neat,

"In every work regard the writer's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend."

I know too little about philosophy in general, about pragmatism and transcendentalism in particular, to be sure of myself here. But it seems to me that Mr. Santayana is criticizing James's philosophy for not being Santayana's. It is all right to condemn blue for being too blue, or not blue enough, but to condemn it for not being green is obviously wrong. Yet that is exactly what Santayana is trying to do. He does not do it consciously, and that caused my confusion and still does to the extent that I can't quite catch him in the act. It is clearest in the chapter on James.

PASSING STORM OVER MARTLESHAM CREEK
Watercolor by W. P. Robins, from The Studio

S. denies that American thought has produced any new or original philosophy. But pragmatism surely was new, and native too. James merely expressed what people thought or vaguely wanted to think. Santayana could not understand that; it was as alien to him as the America he so graciously describes. He wanted system, formal metaphysical system, that which James and the people whose thought he crystallized did not need. The pragmatical method, as I understand it, means judging a thing by its consequences. James took the method and made a philosophy of it. For him the truth was a verified idea, not its verification. The verification process was unimportant, useless and therefore no good. This Mr. Santayana completely fails to comprehend, for he was familiar with the old philosophic consideration of thought as an end in itself. James considered only that thought led to action, was a tool to further action. He valued everything by its immediate usefulness. He discounts experience through individual meditation, for which Santayana cannot forgive him. From his meditative hill top Mr. Santayana criticizes what he refuses to recognize as a practical philosophy.

The "genteel tradition" is in a wheel-chair, enjoying a pleasant old age. I even suspect, after eight years of education in notably "New England" schools, that in the last thirty years it was given a decent burial, very quiet, of course, with the pall-bearers all complacently assuring each other that "it had to come sometime." Or perhaps it was cremated, and its ashes are cherished in a mantel-piece urn, rather like a hand-painted tea-jar, not at all in the way of Penates.

Emily Tompkins.
Northampton, Mass.

Several clients asked us to look up the exact wording of the dedicatory prayer carved in the main corridor of Hart House, at the University of Toronto. Mr. J. B. Bickersteth, the Warden of the House, sends us the text, which begins as follows:

"That Hart House, under the guidance of its Warden, may serve in the generations to come, the highest interests of this University by drawing into a common fellowship the members of the several Colleges and Faculties, and by gathering into a true society the teacher and the student, the graduate and the undergraduate; further, that the members of Hart House may discover within its walls the true education that is to be found in good fellowship, in friendly disputation and debate, in the conversation of wise and earnest men, in music, pictures and the play, in the casual book, in sports and games and the mastery of the body.

I found in the *World-Telegram* a note to the effect that "the last day of Bruce Lockhart's visit here was spent on a boat ride up the Hudson." That is an understatement; it was much better than that. Mr. Lockhart was invited by the Tugboat Committee of the Three Hours for Lunch Club to join them in a morning spent aboard their favorite towboat, *Alice M. Moran,* to watch the docking of the *Aquitania* and the *Berengaria.* It happens by pleasing chance that the chief officer of the *Aquitania,* Mr. Moss, is a friend of Mr. Lockhart. As the liner was swung in toward her berth by the traditional push of *Morans* and *Barretts,* Mr. Moss was leaning over the taffrail with his megaphone to supervise the putting out of the stern-hawser. His surprise was great when he saw the British Agent leaning from the pilot house of the *Alice M. Moran.* "What the deuce are you doing?" he shouted. To which Mr. Lockhart, with readiness learned in a thousand diplomatic encounters, yelled "I just wanted to see you got in safely."

Mr. Andersen, chief engineer of the *Alice,* reports that not long ago he went to see a movie, *Gallant Lady,* in which, he says, the heroine sails from some French port. And the tugs ostensibly taking her out of harbor, in France, were our loved familiars of New York harbor, the *Alice* and *Eugene Moran,* the *Howard Moore* and the *John Nichols.*

Christopher Morley.

The Big Top

CIRCUS COMPANY. By Edward Seago. Illustrated by the Author. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1934. $3.25.

MR. SEAGO is a painter, and attached himself to a circus partly to paint, partly because he was young. But he grew to love the life and the circus people. He found he was happier there than elsewhere, and alternated for years between the world of comfortable conventions and the world of tents and wandering wagons. His friendships there became a major interest. It is a society by itself. Show people are mainly the descendants of show people, and intermarry with one another. Besides the big circuses, there are a great many small ones in England, and on the Continent they are innumerable. Mr. Seago's feeling for them is comparable to Mr. Hemingway's for the bullfighters in this respect, that he feels for the technique, the craftsmanship of the *artistes,* the riders, tumblers, clowns, and so on, for the quality and finish of the great performers, the Paderewskis of the ring. In any craft or profession the more you get inside the more predominant becomes your interest in the methods and personalities of its distinguished practitioners.

With such magnificent material this might have been a better book. It ought to have been full of curious episodes and vivid characters. But Mr. Seago's anecdotes are not very well told, and his conversations not very significant. There is little order or arrangement either chronologically or by subject. But there is informational value. Circus people seem to be very much like other people, however peculiar their way of life, hard working, absorbed in their own affairs, and proud of their craft.

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Tabloid Reviewing

The Tabloid Reviewers, having read our recent symposium by the book columnists of the New York press, here present their problems and points of view.

BY ALICIA PATTERSON

Literary Editor, The New York Daily News

HOW did I sink into this life of book reviewing?

I was building a house and I wanted a lot of books. Books I think make a more effective decor than pictures. Not the calf bound editions that come by the lot from England, but the bright colored backs of the workaday books. They give a room color and warmth, so I ordered the architect to build book shelves and still more book shelves.

When I moved in I found to my discouragement that the books I had collected from childhood—starting with "Peter Rabbit"—barely filled one corner. Instead of color and warmth I was faced with gaping holes. I put the old brain to work and did some powerful thinking. My head served me better than usual—in fact it was inspired—and I landed the job of Sunday book reviewer (with I grant you a little pull).

For a time everything was rosy. Books were coming in by the dozen. Color and warmth sprang up from every side. But the fates were only toying with me. The publisher decided two reviews a week were not enough. I bravely volunteered to do ten, twelve. I sat up all night reading. My electric light bills were gigantic. Till the doctor got hold of me and ordered me to stop. Said my eyes were giving out. The upshot is that I do my two reviews a week and get my two books. The overflow goes to the other reviewers. The graft is ended.

Now that you know what an unworthy person I am, my views on book reviewing won't carry much weight. But here goes.

There has been a lot of discussion back and forth as to the value of a book review in a tabloid newspaper. It is the general feeling that the readers of a tabloid are not quite bright—that they don't read books. Or if they do it is the cheaper, sexier variety they favor. That may have been true at one time but I think that time is passed. Last Christmas I wrote an article on the best sellers of several years ago in comparison with the best sellers of today. The change in public taste is extraordinary. A few years back Edith M. Hull and Elinor Glyn were leading the best seller lists—and according to the accepted opinion "Three Weeks" and "The Sheik" fill the bill as typical tabloid vehicles. Today we find Pearl Buck and John Masefield, and Oswald Spengler are the favorites. What accounts for the change? Does it mean that those people who bought "The Sheik" in 1922 aren't buying books today? That doesn't seem very probable. Or does it mean that public taste has become more serious? I think it has. I am only theorizing now but I believe the change is due to the change in the economic situation. The world is in too much of a mess for people to be satisfied with love nests or Elinor Glyn. Their pocket books are thinner and they want to know the reason why. They want to know about Mr. Roosevelt and the NRA and the Communist Party and Hitler. They have outgrown the flimsy sex romances of yesterday. They are looking for something more substantial to gnaw on.

And having reached this conclusion, I don't see that the problem of a tabloid reviewer is much different from that of a full sized newspaper critic. I agree with Mr. Soskin that an analysis of Proust would be a little out of place—but then Proust appeals to a very limited audience—too limited perhaps for even the readers of the *American*. The ideal, I think, is to strike an average—to review the books that are intelligent but not highbrow.

I choose the books that I review for three reasons. First, the importance of the author. You may not like Sinclair Lewis but he appeals to too wide an audience to be ignored. Second, the importance of the book—if it is timely or amusing, or unusual. Third, my own personal preferences. And I am inclined to think that number 3 wins. Well, why shouldn't it? If you have taken a violent dislike to a certain type of book, say for instance to sentimental Irish novels, you are prejudiced before you start. You aren't giving either the author or your readers a fair break. But of course I have an easier time of it than the daily reviewer. I can pick out the two books of the week I like best and hand the Irish novel to somebody else.

BY CHARLES A. WAGNER

Literary Editor, The New York Daily Mirror

CONTRADICTORY as it may sound, the most interesting and formidable daily book reviewing task is the one which pretends to reach the largest average circulation.

The mass is not selective, in the ordinary sense. The reader of an "Anthony Adverse" is not the scholar or artisan who is willing to spend a week researching the sources of "Anthony Adverse" and calculating the ingredient of fact against the expedient of fancy and creative invention. And yet (to use the overworked analogy once again) it is that white light of the all-embracing mass circulation which contains in it each visible color of mind, spirit, energy toward the emotional outpouring in art if not the instinct for it and, ultimately perhaps, an enthusiasm for its revelations. The mass reads the books, once they are sufficiently underscored for them. The mass finally accounts for any great book success. It accounts for the leadership of faulty state control as well as the worthy and ennobling kind. It judges and creates, and if it judges poorly its scope is of such amazing elasticity, of so broad a metaphysical cloth, that it may as easily tear down what it has created and renew its enthusiasms with an almost immobile calm. This defines at once its limitation and its wealth. It owns everything, including that which it has not of itself achieved. And, thank God, that sophistication belongs to the aristocracy which evolves its own constrictions and breaks up into its stylistic frontiers! Let it stay there.

Any daily newspaper assignment must first be concerned with reader interest. That is a rule which criticism may not circumvent ever. For the newspaperman with conscience any other viewpoint would be a libel upon a curious trust having such devious roots in the lives of the daily adventure in type that the bloom is not calculable in terms of the usual business transaction. As surely as the pulp upon which your column exists contains its compressions of many summers of sunlight deeply ingrained in its fibers, so surely does the enthusiasm evoked by the message of a book become vital or boilerplate, according to the force of sunlight thrown upon it through the proper selections of the book reviewer. Confronted on my paper with the largest circulation in the country carrying a daily book review, a circulation as diverse in its interests as any that has found its way into the history of American journalism, I saw that I must choose between the critical approach which assumed the white tower and permitted the pilgrims to grope toward it and the method of permitting the wayfarer in books to beat new paths toward it and to topple the tower itself occasionally if it had a mind to. I chose the harder course, that of opening criticism to its own limitations, namely the viewpoints of universality inherent in most books as well as in those who create those books by understanding what their messages are.

The drama of words, the music of word-patterns in sound, the joy of entertaining fiction, and the inverted joy of mental hot-bathing over the issues and concerns of the day, of encyclopedic learning, of the educative process in general, these are the concern of the mass readership with more vehemence today than ever before. The old tabloid, which has died, has given place to the new-size newspaper which respects brevity. But brevity is cardinal to all writing. Its demands are probably unwittingly consistent with the tempo of the times.

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The PHŒNIX NEST

By WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

O LISTEN!

ONE of our most eminent institutions of learning (Harvard) can boast a young man (a Mr. *Wade*) who has recently attempted a swift survey of American literature—with an incidental swift kick at Europe, *The Saturday Review of Literature*, and the late Woodrow Wilson, among others. I merely wish to set him right on several points. He says:

There is *Amy Lowell*, the cigar-smoker [*graceful tribute!*] who was the only person that ever told *Abbott Lawrence Lowell* to go to hell and stop talking drivel, the poet who liberated poetry from death by forms through her propaganda for the *vers libre* movement and thus founded modern American poetry. Upon her heels comes *Pound* and after him *Eliot*, the men who have made and written modern poetry. [*Anaylze the above as follows: Even if that anecdote is true of Miss Lowell and her brother, of what possible significance is it in a study of American literature? Poetry has not yet achieved "death by forms"—and what is* vers libre *but a form? The most modern American poets do not proceed upon the principles Miss Lowell laid down. It was Mr. Pound, not Miss Lowell, who invented Imagism, for which she took up the cudgels. Congratulations on the tautology of "made and written!"*]

O'Neill is so inspired by his regained Catholicism, that he has dared to bring religion into the theatre . . . *O'Neill* has an astonishing dramatic sense; he knows intuitively what his father, an actor, would tell him is "good theatre."

[*This should interest Mr. O'Neill, both in regard to his "regained Catholicism" and because having "a dramatic sense" is not necessarily at all the same thing as knowing what is "good theatre." His father was an actor. Yes.*]

Willa Cather has written a few notable books like *O Antonia*, which seem to be on the way to enshrinement as minor classics, but her talent is too delicate for great themes.

[*O Antonia, O Montreal!—O Pioneers, O Quebec!*]

MRS. PEART

Dale Warren of the Houghton Mifflin Company rather startles me with certain information concerning *Mrs. Barbara Peart* who recently reached Boston *en route* from Monterey to England. Her "Tia Barbarita" has been a best-seller from coast to coast. It tells the story of her four score years in Ireland, the Argentine, Mexico, Texas, and the New York of the '80's. She triumphed over poverty, floods, fire, famine, plague, and other such trifles. After each one of her seven children was born—under the most primitive conditions—she stayed religiously in bed for all of three days, lying unprotestingly under four years of the *Illustrated London News*, bound together into a stout volume. This was to preserve her figure. Whenever she wishes to indulge in a memory test all she has to do is to try to recite the birthdays of her twenty-nine grandchildren and fifteen great-grandchildren!

WORD GROUPS

From Lomas de Chapultepec, Mexico, D. F., Mexico, *Margaret Lee* writes me:

Last year I began a collection of "word groups." It never grew very large because I let them happen to me—I was afraid to look for them. Here are my choice ones:

1. The Delectable Mountains. Is it from "Pilgrim's Progress" or where? [Yes, it's from *Bunyan*—Ed.] The Delectable Mountains! I wish it were my own. [So did *Mr. Arthur Colton*, as I remember. He adopted it as the title of one of his books.—Ed.]

2. The Climbing Wave. This, as you probably know, is from *Tennyson's* "Lotus Eaters." It goes: "Let us alone. What pleasure can we have . . . forever climbing up the climbing wave?" That is universal. It suggests the inexpressible that none of us has yet said in full. Weariness and knowledge, analysis and admission.

3. The Sincere Milk of the Word. From the Bible. That is the best. How did they think of saying it like that? Isn't it perfect? Untouchable.

Miss Lee also says that the best simile she ever heard used—just about—was her grandmother's, "as ugly as homemade sin!" Page *Mr. Wilstach!* Also she reminds me that in "To the Stars," *Andreyev* remarks:

Man thinks only about his life and about his death. That's why life is so terrible for him. That's why he feels as dull and tedious as a flea that has strayed into a marble vault.

YOUTH AND WAR

I wish to print the following letter, because it strikes me as an unusually honest opinion by an undergraduate. It came to the *Editor* of *The Saturday Review* accompanied by a sonnet which I shall also present to you. The sonnet is certainly not first-rate poetry, but the combination of the letter and the sonnet make an impressive human document.

Dear Sir:

I am enclosing a poem for the *Saturday Review*, which, I realize, needs far more than a mere word of explanation and justification.

I was told recently by an older man that youth has a tendency towards morbidness, which we fortunately outgrow later. You probably can attest the latter portion of that statement, while I certainly can vouch for the former part. However, I believe that any such tendency towards morbidness on our part is not, as some would have us believe, a conscious pose, but rather it is the outcome of the hopeless muddle in which we find ourselves in regard to the omnipresent question of war.

Among all my friends I do not know one that sees anything pleasant or glorious in the prospect of war. We all dread and fear it, and yet at the same time see little use in making the futile gesture of avowed and militant pacifism. Most of my own group in fact, are members of an R. O. T. C. unit, as freshmen, and many of us have had four years of military training in high school.

Nevertheless, the theoretical knowledge we have on the subject of fighting involves no desire to put it into practice. On the contrary, it makes us realize more the awful hopelessness and uselessness of war.

In Europe and in the Far East, war clouds are again gathering. Talk of war fills the air. And in the meantime, we who will fight the next war when it comes, not knowing exactly how we do feel on the subject, and just what we should do if war broke out, seek relief in just such expressions as I have enclosed, finding salvation in putting uncertain feelings into vague, weak phrases, which satisfactorily confuse and cloud the issue.

And so it is that I have written this sonnet, and having written it, seek to rid myself of it by sending it to you. As for its disposition—well, your wastebasket is as good as mine for a quite typical college freshman's effusion.

Sincerely,
PYKE JOHNSON, JR.

TESTAMENT OF YOUTH

With aching eyes from unshed tears,
Within our hearts a numbing pain,
Which tells us men have *died in vain,*
We come into our own, aware of years
Through which we can but blindly grope
In gnawing grief that knows no bound.
'Neath martial notes we hear the sound
Which tolls a dirge for dying hope.
While statesmen, matching hate with hate,
Show far too well how men forget,
And seeing War's grim spectre, yet
Bereft of dreams, we dumbly wait
Until the fear of drawing breath
Has almost equalled that of Death.

LITTLE RED SCHOOL HOUSE

Joseph T. Shipley, of *The New Leader*, has sent us an announcement of the second series of Little Red School House Lectures, to the first of which we gave some publicity last year. Though, alas, Professor *Overstreet's* lecture, and *Mark Van Doren's*, have now gone by since we received the announcement, there will be a remarkably interesting symposium on "The Arts Today," on the 28th of this month. *Thomas Benton*, the noted mural painter, will speak on painting; *Edgar Varese*, the well-known composer, will speak on music; The Dance will be discussed by *Martha Graham*, Poetry, by *Eda Lou Walton*, and Fiction by *Helen Grace Carlisle*. On April 18th "The Red Curtain," (Theatre and Life in Russia) will be the title of a lecture by *Oliver M. Sayler*, well-known to readers of *The Saturday Review*, and later in April *Theodore Dreiser* is to speak. The Little Red School House is at 196 Bleecker Street, this city, the price for the series of lectures a dollar fifty, and the time on Wednesdays is 8:30 P. M.

Jane Culver

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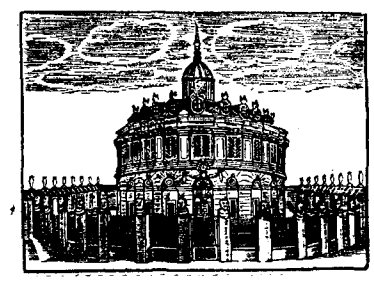

Dr. John Fell (1625-86), Dean of Christ Church and Bishop of Oxford, was one of the most enthusiastic patrons and promoters of the Oxford Press, to which he gave the world-renowned beautiful Fell type. He established the first type foundry at Oxford and the first paper mill at Wolvercote (which is still in operation). He fought a long battle which resulted in the right to print Bibles and Prayer Books at Oxford. There are now more than 600 different styles of Oxford Bibles. The Sheldonian Theatre, shown above, was built under the direction of Dr. Fell and became the home of the Oxford Press in 1669.

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Peace by Anesthetic

WAR UNLESS . . . By Sisley Huddleston. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1934. $2.

Reviewed by FRANK H. SIMONDS

SOMETIME last year Sisley Huddleston became definitively "fed up" with the international conference. It might have been the London Economic Conference, with its short and sensational collapse, it might have been the Disarmament Conference with its long and lingering dissolution which did the trick. It might have been the cumulative effect of fourteen years of international conferences (for the former Paris correspondent of the London *Times* has attended most of the post-war meetings) which sent him off the reservation. But at all events off he went, and the result is the present book.

Like everybody else whose business it is to follow events in Europe, Mr. Huddleston today sees war just around the corner. And it is the fact that for at least four years while war has been approaching steadily and unmistakably, the world has been indulging in what he calls "pactomania," which arouses his alarm and his anger. What he has to say about the approach of war is interesting. It suffers a little from the fact that between the writing and publishing of his observations events have outrun the prophet and the book that was meant to be a solemn warning has become a visible understatement.

Huddleston thinks there will be a war unless the United States and Great Britain can find a common ground for action, and he deals with just contempt with the habit of American diplomacy in meddling everywhere and assuming responsibility nowhere. He also thinks the war must come unless the four great powers of Europe, with Russia in the background and to be included in the new Holy Alliance in due time, get together as Mussolini suggested a year ago, when he brought forward his Four-Power Pact. And one of the main objectives of such coöperation would be treaty revision.

Discussing the territorial questions, Huddleston covers the usual ground with more than usual clarity and good sense. Polish Corridor, Hungaria Irredenta, all the familiar danger-spots of Europe are dealt with. I happen to differ with him in believing, for example, that the Poles would voluntarily consent or could be persuaded without war to accept Lithuania instead of the Corridor, and Memel instead of Gdynia as their outlet on the sea. But everyone agrees that unless some readjustment of the Corridor Question is made peacefully, war will come in due course of time. And that stands, in spite of the present non-aggression pact of Hitler and Pilsudski, which amounts to a postponement of the inevitable, because neither dictator wants war now.

But the portion of Huddleston's book that is at least measurably an excursion into new pastures is that which deals with the sham and deception of the peace performances of the post-war years, centering of course in Geneva. He has a scorn, the justified and magnificent scorn of a man with a sound digestion and a saving sense of humor, for all the subterfuges, propaganda, and pervasive distortion of facts, which have surrounded Geneva and its works for the past decade.

The truth that all of us who have been writing about international affairs in recent years have felt poignantly, is that there are two things people refuse to consider objectively, and these are war and death. They want to be told that they are going to have peace forever and that they will live to eternity. Thus they demand that their international troubles shall be interpreted by Pollyannas and their personal ailments treated by Dr. Pangloss. The writer or lecturer who will tell people war is out of the question now has the moral certainty of awakening applause or acquiring "fan-mail" instantly. But pity the poor "pessimist," who points out that men do die and wars also come!

Huddleston felt the sham, the hypocrisy, the fatally menacing deceit of all this post-war palavering and pretending. He felt it long before the events of recent weeks demonstrated the fact to all save the wilfully blind. He cried out against it in an indictment which deserves very wide and careful reading.

Take the following as an example of the man and the book:

> I do not propose to go into details of the League's work. It is notorious that it touches nothing it does not adjourn. It is notorious that it does not condemn any high-handed action plainly and promptly and always considers the interests of its most powerful members. It is notorious that it ultimately acquiesces in any iniquitous decision taken by a nation which chooses to defy it. It is notorious that it cannot enforce the guarantees of minorities. It is notorious that it talks platitudes but never advances. It is notorious that it is looked upon as an instrument of domination by groups of powers and that, always negative, it is being used to prevent necessary changes in Europe. It is notorious that it has solved no major controversial problems and cannot while it is a League of Foreign Offices . . . It is notorious that the League is impotent and hypocritical . . . It is notorious that so far as its chief object, the assuring of peace is concerned, the League has failed.

That's the indictment and it can be substantiated sentence by sentence. Only the other day the friends of the League were moving heaven and earth to prevail upon the Austrian government to withdraw its appeal to Geneva, lest that appeal disclose the League impotent and thus further reduce its slight prestige. It was the same over Manchuria, when Simon and Boncour united to urge the Chinese representative at Geneva to withdraw his appeal to the Council, when the Japanese troops were conquering a Chinese province, because, since the League was clearly unable to do anything, it would suffer by the disclosure of that fact.

Huddleston's is a little book with a big punch. But the punch does not lie in the logical and unexceptionable manner in which he sets forth the reasons why war is coming, but the cool and contemptuous fashion in which he exposes the post-war politicians and the way in which the "peaceafyers," professional and otherwise, have helped these politicians disguise the truth and let us drift into another war, still satisfied that the millennium had arrived, and that, by the simple device of signing a new "scrap of paper," all the old dangers could be exorcised. "Peace by anesthetic," that has been the watchword, but unhappily for the sloganites, the patient is beginning to come out of the ether.

The Actual Sea

THE LOG OF A LIMEJUICER. Experiences of Captain James P. Barker as told to his son Roland Barker. New York: Huntington Press. 1934. $2.50.

Reviewed by FELIX RIESENBERG

THE honest mariner, whose great heart is visible on every page of this book, a God-fearing man not afraid of the sea, able to tack and wear and clubhaul his ship, to slip cables off rocky coasts, to fight mutiny and fire, and to beat for stormy weeks about Cape Horn, won a great sea race, driving his ship, the *British Isles*, from Antwerp to 'Frisco, in competition with Thompson, master of the American flyer *Homeward Bound*.

Unlike many of the yarns of ancient mariners, this one tells more than the facts of the sea, it reveals the growth of a man, it carries a story of shipmates, of that last enormous struggle between the sea and its storms, and man himself unaided by power. Captain Barker begins his life on the half deck, a brassbounder, and we follow him upward to the quarterdeck, and to command, his wife with him on long sea voyages, or ashore, at intervals, when they were parted years on end. A fine and poignant picture is drawn, largely by inference, of the man who not only mastered the sea but was master of himself. The substance of a dozen synthetic adventure stories is here. Captain Barker and his bride, coming on board of his first command, the ship *Dovenly Hall*, find blood stains that cannot be removed marking the white scrubbed deck of the cabin. The ship *British Isles* runs away from the mighty *Preussen*, both sailing south'ard on long voyages. A vigia shows; while in mid-ocean they suddenly report unknown land, five fathoms down, and less than a fathom below the keel. One scend of the sea and the ship would break her back and kick out her masts. Boats are swung out, lead is going, and we live a brilliant moment of breathless adventure.

Forty-four years at sea, forty-one times around Cape Horn, a sailor from keel to truck, Captain Barker has made a brave and an important book, a book that will hold the reader from start to finish.

* *

Captain Riesenberg's own experiences would make a lively chronicle, for he was at sea, sail and steam, for years was a member of polar expeditions, navigator of the airship in the first attempt to reach the North Pole by dirigible, and made a record passage in a sailing ship from Santa Cruz de Teneriffe to New London. He has written much fiction and non-fiction on the sea.

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The Clearing House

Conducted by AMY LOVEMAN

Inquiries in regard to the choice of books should be addressed to Miss Loveman, c/o *The Saturday Review*. A stamped and addressed envelope should be enclosed for reply.

The Art of Biography

WE find ourself in the most terrible quandary. We've had so many letters telling us that it is difficult to pick up at a glance the answers to individual inquiries that we've decided to set the questions of our readers in the proud isolation of italics, and now we discover that to do so involves exceeding wariness lest we fasten upon them a haphazardness which was not theirs originally. Thus we were about to state that we thought that

M. S. of Pittsburgh, Pa., who wishes "information concerning the growth of biographical writing or the places from which such information is to be found

would probably discover what she wants best set forth in Harold Nicolson's THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH BIOGRAPHY (Harcourt, Brace), when we saw that our italic sentence was hanging in air without any verb to complete it. We'll have to use our ingenuity to give our inquiries an air of self-containment when they are part of a longer paragraph. But to go back to M. S.'s request. Mr. Nicolson's book traces the course of biographical literature from 500 A. D. to the present day, and if ability to write well in a genre is qualification for discussion of it the volume bears the patent of nobility on its face, for its author in his THE PORTRAIT OF A DIPLOMATIST (Houghton Mifflin), a study of his father, and in SOME PEOPLE (whose popularity has just been proven by its issue in the World's Classics series by the Oxford University Press), shows himself a biographer of delectable sort. Another valuable work which traces the stream of English biography is Waldo Dunn's ENGLISH BIOGRAPHY (Dutton); this stops short, however, at the threshold of the twentieth century. Much information, gracefully presented, may be had from William Roscoe Thayer's THE ART OF BIOGRAPHY (Scribners), a sketch which like Wilbur Cross's OUTLINE OF BIOGRAPHY (Holt), has the advantage of a good bibliography. One of the most recent discussions of the subject is André Maurois's ASPECTS OF BIOGRAPHY (Appleton-Century). It is curious, more especially in view of the high favor biography has enjoyed in recent years, that there is no comprehensive study of this form of literature, none which includes in any detail the development and ramifications of biographical writing, including and distinguishing between the diary, autobiography, letters, and biography. For the subdivisions of biography M. S. will have to consult different books. Anna Robeson Burr has written two volumes (both of them published by Houghton Mifflin) on the self-memoir, which includes diaries, journals, reminiscences, etc., THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY, and RELIGIOUS CONFESSIONS AND CONFESSANTS. The last of these is devoted exclusively to the large literature which spiritual struggles have evoked. The field of the diary is the special domain of Arthur Ponsonby, who presents a vast number of examples and excerpts in his ENGLISH DIARIES FROM THE SIXTEENTH TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, MORE ENGLISH DIARIES, and SCOTTISH AND IRISH DIARIES (Doubleday, Doran). The first of these books is prefaced by a lengthy and interesting Introduction in which Mr. Ponsonby enters into the qualities and characteristics of diary writing, a "unique form," he says, "since from it all restraints can be lifted and in the open fields of fact and fancy the diarist can browse, repose, or gallop along at his own sweet will."

Some Modern Autobiographies

How difficult it is to pick and choose among the mass of recent and fairly recent autobiographical writing we discovered when we attempted to segregate a few titles in response to a statement that

M. D. of Boston, Mass., would like the titles of the ten or twelve best autobiographies published within the last sixty years. By best, M. D. explains, she means those famous not only for their own intrinsic interest and charm but because of one's natural interest in the writer.

Even with her explanation of the word best, we balk at the classification, for judgment as to the attractiveness and value of an autobiography will necessarily vary with the interest which the individual reader feels in its subject matter. Thus Michael Pupin's FROM IMMIGRANT TO INVENTOR (Scribners) to the scientist may be of the first interest, while to his fellow sociologist Jacob Riis's THE MAKING OF AN AMERICAN (Macmillan) may prove more enthralling, and to the lover of the lighter side of history THE COURTS OF MEMORY (Harpers), by Lily Hegermann-Lindencrone may be still more enticing. As a matter of fact we find ourselves at a loss when it comes to rating the autobiographies that come to mind, so we present them merely as outstanding and highly interesting examples of their type of literature. First there is a batch of American literary autobiographies, such as the JOURNALS of Emerson and Thoreau (Houghton Mifflin), which have been boiled down from their fuller state to smaller compass in THE HEART OF EMERSON'S JOURNALS and THE HEART OF THOREAU'S JOURNALS, Henry James's A SMALL BOY AND OTHERS, THE MIDDLE YEARS, and LETTERS (Scribners), Hamlin Garland's SON OF THE MIDDLE BORDER (Macmillan), James Gibbons Huneker's STEEPLEJACK (Scribners), Ludwig Lewisohn's UPSTREAM (Harpers), and the recently issued JOURNAL OF GAMALIEL BRADFORD (Houghton Mifflin). Then there are the LETTERS OF WILLIAM JAMES (Little, Brown), a collection of remarkable correspondence both in its content and its style, and THE EDUCATION OF HENRY ADAMS (Houghton Mifflin), perhaps the outstanding autobiographical work of recent years. On the outer limits of M. D.'s period of years lie the military memoirs like those of Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan, and other heroes of war. Coming down to our own times are Theodore Roosevelt's DIARIES OF BOYHOOD AND YOUTH, AUTOBIOGRAPHY, and LETTERS TO HIS CHILDREN (Scribners). There are fascinating collections of letters by American diplomatic representatives like Lowell, Motley, Hay, and Page. And certainly, to go back in time again, mention ought to be made of a book which has had an enormous public, THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM BY HIMSELF, which is to be had today in two versions, BARNUM'S OWN STORY (Viking), edited by Waldo R. Browne, and P. T. BARNUM, WRITTEN BY HIMSELF (Knopf), edited by George S. Bryan.

From English autobiography we pick almost at random such titles as the AUTOBIOGRAPHY of John Stuart Mill (to be had in various reprint editions), Cardinal Newman's APOLOGIA PRO VITA SUA (also available in reprints), Viscount Morley's RECOLLECTIONS (Macmillan), MY DIARIES (Knopf), by Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, a violent anti-imperialist who fought valiantly with tongue and pen for the independence of Ireland and Egypt, and who was at once poet, diplomat, parliamentarian, and traveler, THE JOURNAL OF ARNOLD BENNETT (Viking), and the memoirs of such men as Asquith, Viscount Grey, Winston Churchill, and others of the war period. There is, of course, fiction which is in reality autobiography, of which such books as Gosse's FATHER AND SON (Scribners) and Borrow's LAVENGRO (Dutton: Everyman's Library), are representative examples. But we cease, lest we go on forever.

Is This It?

We were enormously cheered up some time ago by getting from Brigadier *General Walter D. McCaw of Woodstock, N.Y.*, what we think may be the solution of the "Jan o' the Mill" puzzle that has been troubling us so long. We print with heartiest thanks to him the letter we were so glad to get:

> Having been a reader of the *Review* since its inception, and a "charter member," I wish to make an attempt, at least, to solve your "second best puzzle," as stated in the issue of *S. R. L.*, January 20th, 1934.
>
> Over fifty-six years ago, as a boy of fourteen or fifteen, I read and reread with great interest a story of adventure in England and the continent of Europe called either JACK O' THE MILL or, possibly, JAN O' THE MILL. It is by William Howitt. Time of action, I think, Tudor period. I have never seen or heard of it since. My copy, as I remember, was a cheap, double columned (fine print) book, probably published in Philadelphia. It was very exciting and interesting to a youngster of my time. I remember very little of it except that the hero, after many exciting stunts, became "Sir John (?) Othmill."
>
> Needless to say, he was the usual "foundling" of unknown parentage. If you find out anything more of this book or if I have in any way contributed to the answer to your "second best puzzle," I shall be gratified.

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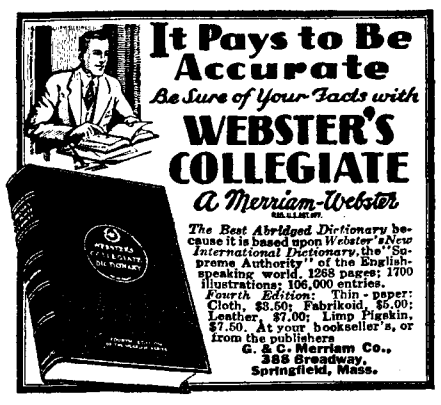
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Dukes of Milan

THE STORY OF THE SFORZAS. By L. Collison-Morley. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1934. $3.75.

Reviewed by GARRETT MATTINGLY

IN 1450 Francesco Sforza, a successful mercenary general, seized the vacant duchy of Milan and made himself the most powerful of Italian princes. Francesco's father had abandoned the hard life on the little family farm near Cotignola to serve as a man-at-arms in a mercenary company; Francesco's son ruled the most splendid court of the Renaissance and was wont to boast that the Pope was his chaplain, the Emperor his condottiere, the Doge of Venice his chamberlain, and the King of France his courier. In 1500 that same son, Lodovico il Moro, was driven from his duchy and died a prisoner in a foreign land. Two sons of Lodovico ruled briefly in Milan thereafter as puppet dukes, and with these grandchildren of the great Francesco the brilliant Sforza dynasty came to an inglorious end.

Even in its bare outlines the story of the Sforzas can be seen to have unusual unity and interest. The surrounding circumstances heighten that interest enormously. With the rise of the Sforzas, the glory of Renaissance Italy rose to its heights; under them Milan became the first modern city and the center of the first modern state; their vast revenues, their populous, compact, and prosperous territory made them of European importance; their diplomatic influence extended from the Bosphorus to beyond the English Channel; their court, adorned by scholars and by artists, was the most brilliant of their time; with the extinction of their dynasty, Italian genius sank crushed under the heel of the foreign invader. In all the great events of their time the Sforzas were conspicuous actors; their personalities and actions have been preserved for us with a wealth of detail, in their own letters, in writings of their contemporaries—among them such shrewd observers as Machiavelli and de Comines,—and in masses of public documents and diplomatic correspondence of the period. All this has been the subject of much illuminating research by Italian scholars during the past century. It is, therefore, surprising that the story of the Sforzas has never been adequately told in English and the subject of Mr. Collison-Morley's book seems happily chosen.

Unfortunately, only the choice of subject can be honestly commended. After showing in his essays on "Italy after the Renaissance" considerable competence and talent, Mr. Collison-Morley produced last year an ill-digested and superficial "Story of the Borgias." His present book is in the same vein but distinctly inferior. To the very much wider and more complicated subject of the Sforzas he seems to have given even less time and thought. Limitations of space prevent him from any real study of the history of Milan either in its internal or its external aspects during the vital and fascinating half-century of Sforza rule. But though he dismisses the Peace of Lodi in a sentence, remarks that Galeazzo Maria "followed his father's footsteps in foreign policy" (a blunder from which even a hasty consultation of the preface to Baron Gingins-le-Sarra's "Dépêches des Ambassadeurs Milanais" would have saved him), and omits even the briefest outline of the internal administration of the duchy, the space thus saved is not profitably employed. It is squandered in uninformative digressions, in retelling stories already better told by such easily available authors as Burckhardt and J. A. Symonds, and in long accounts of Renaissance pageantry and haberdashery. "The Story of the Sforzas" makes little pretense to thorough or critical scholarship: no one of the great collections of diplomatic documents of the period appears in the bibliography, for instance; Machiavelli and Malipiero are apparently quoted at second hand; and the dubious anecdotes of Corio and Jovius find a ready welcome. But the author's style and powers of digestion are apparently unequal to the burden of even the information he has at hand: his outline is uncertain and without significant proportions; his paragraphs are too often a jumble of unrelated facts; his sentences jerk and halt in a tangle of relative pronouns. It is difficult to see what purpose a book like this can be expected to serve. C. M. Ady's "Milan under the Sforzas" (1907) (which, by the way, finds no place in Mr. Collison-Morley's bibliography) is, with all its faults, a better account of the people and the time, clearer and more readable. And yet the subject cries out to be rehandled. No page in Italian history offers richer possibilities. Nor is Mr. Collison-Morley unfitted to exploit them. By being in too great a hurry he has missed a golden opportunity.

Garrett Mattingly is a historian whose special field of interest is the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

One More Heine

HEINE: A LIFE BETWEEN LOVE AND HATE. By Ludwig Marcuse. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1933. $3.

Reviewed by LOUIS UNTERMEYER

THIS latest biography of Heine is a curious composition. It contains all the facts; it summons the spirit of the romantic bourgeois "realism" which characterized the early nineteenth century in Germany and France; it mirrors the period when, as Heine said, there were no more nations in Europe, only parties; it misses nothing of importance, either biographical or historical. And yet it is a disappointing book. Perhaps it is the method which Marcuse has employed. The author has elected to write the life of a poet without telling us much about the poetry. We learn about Heine's relations with his family, his friends, his mistress, his last platonic inamorata, about every relation except the relation to his work. We never quite lose sight of the fact that Heine was a poet; but we rarely are shown what it was that determined the swiftly alternating pitch, the incongruous combinations, the blends of tenderness and vulgarity, the very contradictory quality of his creation.

Perhaps the tone is to blame. Whether the original or the translation is responsible, the style, the very turn of thought, is over-colored; it is a little too breathless, too anxious to drive its well-driven points home. Except for the detached historical passages, the tone assumes melodramatic accents. The subtitle illustrates this theatricalizing: "A Life Between Love and Hate." The author does not know where to draw the line between sentiment and sentimentality; the very chapter headings are significant: "A Scared Hero," "A Discomfited Pagan," "An Unhappy Subjectivist," "The Dying Aristophanes." The allusions are often as unfortunate. At the end Marcuse calls Heine "the paralyzed Romeo," a particularly unhappy characterization when one recalls all the youthful ardor and credulity suggested by the Shakespearean lover and then thinks of the poor wasted Jew on his mattress grave, sick with cynicism and consumption of the spinal marrow.

This is not to say that the book is without its definite merits. The speech is not, as the publishers claim, "clear and crescendo-like—intoxicating," nor does Marcuse's style "combine the past with the future," no mean feat for the style of anyone short of the author of the Old Testament! But the more than three hundred pages do give an excellent picture of the crowded and kaleidoscopic period. The historical résumés are thorough without being pedantic. The differences between the German principalities as well as the basic differences between the German and French cultures are skilfully presented. The portrait of Mathilde, Heine's mistress-wife, with her antipathy to poetry and devotion to her parrot, is richly detailed.

But the book does not live up to its program. In spite of its understanding of mixed motives, for all its careful documentation, it is not a new revelation, not even a revaluation.

Nolte's Memoirs Are Lifted from Oblivion

THE MEMOIRS OF VINCENT NOLTE. By Vincent Nolte. Translated from the German. Introduction by Burton Rascoe. New York: G. Howard Watt. 1934. $2.50.

Reviewed by BEN RAY REDMAN

THERE is an art in reprinting as in all things, and discrimination in this field is valuable as in others. "Reproducers," wrote J. W. Hales, in a forgotten paper published nearer sixty than fifty years ago, "must be expected to show some judgment. There are some old books that enjoy quite as much existence as they deserve if the original copies are still preserved in accessible libraries. It is unnecessary to ask them to step out into the world again, and disport themselves in modern raiment. We do not want them to come and stay with us; our houses are overcrowded already. We shall be quite content if we can call on them now and then, without expecting a return visit, from which their age and feebleness excuse them."

Nolte's memoirs answer fairly to Professor Hales's description. They compose a book which had its day in the light, but which is not likely to enjoy another; a book that belongs in public rather than in private libraries. Had Hervey Allen not happened to come upon Nolte's volume, and take from it certain materials for the composition of "Anthony Adverse," it is unlikely that the average reader of this generation would ever have heard of the adventurous and industrious merchant who was born at Leghorn in 1779, and who set down his reminiscences at Hamburg in 1853. But Mr. Allen did come upon Nolte, and turned him to his purpose. In the novelist's own words: "The great banking scheme upon which Nolte was engaged, bringing silver from Mexico through the United States and reshipping it to Napoleon, provided the material for the connecting link in my plot between Europe and America. . . ." Mr. Allen's romance has become one of the best best-sellers of our time, and in consequence the real Nolte has been made "to step out into the world again," though not entirely dight in "modern raiment"; for this new edition of his memoirs, which now bears the sub-title, "Reminiscences in the Period of Anthony Adverse," appears to be a photographic or zincographic reproduction of the 1854 edition of "Fifty Years in Both Hemispheres, or Reminiscences of the Life of a Former Merchant." Whatever the method of manufacture, it is not impertinent to note that the table of contents, from the thirteenth chapter on, fails to keep step with the pagination of the text. Something or somebody must have slipped.

Mr. Burton Rascoe, whose enthusiasms remain enviably robust, "quite fervently" recommends Herr Nolte to the public attention and ventures to bracket him with Cellini as an autobiographer. Let me quote a few of Mr. Rascoe's seductive words. "In his memoirs a panorama of the history of Europe and of North America passes before our eyes. We see him watch within himself an apprehension of, and an identification with, all that was going on in the two hemispheres about which he writes."

I quote Mr. Rascoe, in fairness to Nolte, because he has obviously found the "Memoirs" exciting and remarkable, whereas I have found them, in the main, unexciting and mediocre. It is not enough, for me at least, that an autobiographer should have witnessed great events, known great men, or even participated in affairs of moment; he must also have more than an ordinary power over words. Without that power, the record of what he has seen and done is only a commonplace record, fit to furnish facts for the historian or materials for the novelist. Memoir writers of Nolte's calibre abound in every age, but after satisfying the curiosity of their contemporaries they are generally permitted to remain in the obscurity from which Vincent Nolte has been adventitiously lifted. In their obscurity they may be consulted by other writers, who fashion their raw material into the fascinating syntheses of history or the glittering patterns of romance. Lying deep in libraries, they serve their purpose well, and deserve well of the public, even though the public knows them only at second-hand. But there is no point, in such a place as this, in dwelling upon the usefulness of authors like Nolte to the student and the specialist; the student and the specialist know all about the Noltes of this world. I have tried to speak only for, and to, that myriad-headed being called the general reader.

BY E. A. RHEINHARDT

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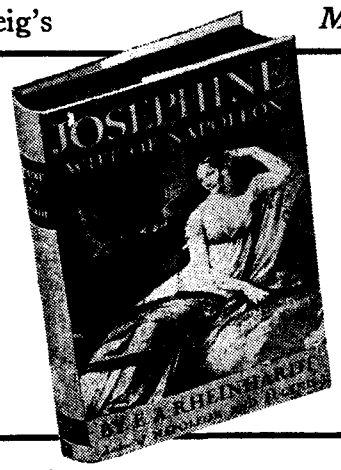

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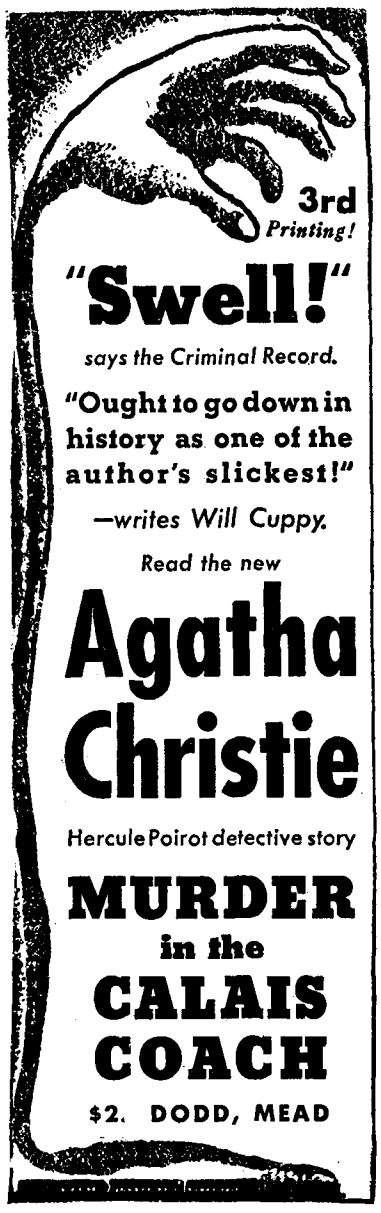

THE ARYAN PATH
Vol. V MARCH, 1934 No. 3

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The New Books

Biography

ADVENTURE'S A WENCH. By Charles Veil. Morrow. 1934. $3.

Adventure, Mr. Veil assures us in his first paragraph, "is a red-hot little female longing to be raped. I'm very sick of the idea that she's a goddess, twin sister of chance; that she is fickle and high-hat and must be respectfully wooed. Let the Richard Halliburtons of the world court her with money and planned-to-the-minute maneuvers; they may find her body and sell photographs of it to the palpitating public but they will never find the bawdy soul of her."

From this rather typical passage, it may be surmised that the author, at least as he is made to speak by his ghost-writer, Howard Marsh, isn't addicted to understatement. He's a wild hombre, and very anxious that we shall be aware of that fact. Beginning with a flight from a shot-gun marriage, when he was nineteen and a student at Wesleyan, he works his passage to the Argentine on a freighter, and thence by way of many women and one escapade after another, to France and the Lafayette Escadrille—it was Veil, it appears, who flew his plane through the Arc de Triomphe during the Armistice celebration—to Russia for brief service with the A. R. A. until he was requested to leave, and thence to other women and other adventures in the war between Turkey and Greece, and finally in French Africa.

Mr. Veil's experiences lack significance and differ from the usual bar-room boasting mainly in the number of them that happen to one man. He would have done better, it would seem, to have set them down himself or to have found a less florid ghost-writer. For the attractiveness that might be found in such a frank and unblushing record, if reported in simple, hard-boiled style, is, through fancy writing, lost.

Fiction

DARK ANGEL. By Gina Kaus. Macmillan. 1934. $2.

It is odd in this day of hurried fictional forms to come upon an old device used in the leisurely and loving manner of the last century. Gina Kaus, whose earlier novel, "Luxury Liner," made use of the modern "Grand Hotel" technique, adopts just such a device in her latest work, "Dark Angel." She lets her story be told by the middle-aged governess of her two beautiful young heroines. And by this means she gains the advantage of whatever partial or emotional foreshortening best suits her purpose, gaining, too, a quick intimacy with the reader and a pleasant atmosphere of informality.

Love in the variations imposed by personalities is the theme of the novel. Every man and woman in the book is caught by some filament of this love and bound tenuously but inescapably to the others within the net. It radiates out from the predestined and star-crossed central passion to the fringes where it creates its havoc quite as thoroughly, if more incidentally.

War-time Vienna and post-war Austria furnish the setting for the action of the story. The haste of youth to know love before death, the quick forgetfulness demanded by long lists of casualties, the permeating disillusionment of the broken returned ones, these infect the narrative with their own virus and mould the contours of the plot to their own hour. The shift of emphasis in both manners and morals during this hectic period plays into the light and shadow of the lives portrayed, but human nature fundamentally, beneath this shift, is assumed by the author to be much the same whatever the guise of circumstance. Frau Kaus's heroines could have reached out for love and lost the quarry in any other day or place but it would have been with very different gestures. The story makes use of many and tried devices, but they all lose their ready-made stamp in the easy flow of the author's minute recounting of their causes and effects.

G. G.

COME OUT OF THE PANTRY. By Alice Duer Miller. Dodd, Mead. 1934. $2.

Mrs. Miller is a practised magazine writer. Among the concocters of lighter periodical fiction for an idle hour she has her place as an entertainer. She creates credible people, even though most of them are far from brilliant. In competition with such an entertainer as P. G. Wodehouse, we could not give Mrs. Miller more than seventy per cent, say, to Wodehouse's hundred—but then Wodehouse is supreme in his own field.

In the present volume Mrs. Miller deals chiefly with polite drawing-room comedy. "Come Out of the Pantry," the title story and the longest in this book of five stories, concerns a titled Englishman, though a younger son, who becomes footman in a rich American family owing to a bad turn of luck and circumstances over which he has no control. Naturally he falls in love, well, if not with the daughter of the house with the next young lady to it, and everything comes out pleasantly enough in the end. It is all rather like a Richard Harding Davis story adapted to our age. Mrs. Miller's "Come Out of the Kitchen," as we vaguely recall it, was a good deal funnier.

The second story in the book, "My Pretty Maid," is somewhat preposterous, and the plot-machinery seems to the present reviewer to creak pretty badly. "Mother Announcing," that follows, is a slight irony, but successful in its end-twist. Skipping the best story in the book we do like the character of Mr. Katzenoff in "Whether She Loved Him," otherwise a fairly stereotyped magazine confection. The stolidity of Mr. Katzenoff is most pleasing. But the best story in the book, now to return to it, is "They Shall Not

(*Continued on next page*)

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
PAGE MR. POMEROY *Elizabeth Jordan* (Appleton-Century: $2.)	Young American go-getter kidnapped by Russian aristocrats; action leading from Central Park to Maine island. No sleuth.	Holds little of advertised mystery, but rich in turn-of-the-century type of love-story-slush.	Mushy
DEATH CRUISES SOUTH *Roger Denbie* (Morrow: $2.)	Criminological Dr. Quentin Pace, on vacation "where the remote Bermudas ride," runs foul of tangled show business and bloody murder.	Sleuth proves more efficient than interesting; reader kept wondering, but unexcitedly.	Tame
THE KILLING OF THE GOLDEN GOOSE *R. Jere Black* (Loring and Mussey: $2.)	Rich old man with lovely 2nd wife and pack of nasty children reads new will—and off he goes.	Suave Christopher King satisfactorily cleans up three deaths and brace of murderous attacks.	Routine
THE SECRET AGENT *Sidney Horler* (Little, Brown: $2.)	Super-super criminal, called "Disguiser," finally unbearded in his sub-Gibraltarean den by daring Bunny Chipstead.	Killings, kidnapings, fights with apes, struggles with swarthy savages, international plots, etc., all in one book.	Oh my!

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WHAT HAPPENS AT LOURDES? by H. FLANDERS DUNBAR

EFFICIENCY UNIVERSITY by JOHN FLAGG GUMMERE

SUBSISTENCE FARMSTEADS by MRS. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

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The New Books

(*Continued from preceding page*)

Pass," presenting the final gesture of an elderly patrician maiden lady surprised by gangsters. It shows what Mrs. Miller can do when she has real material.

It would be idle to break a butterfly upon a wheel. These stories were designed chiefly for entertainment and they do entertain. Before this, however, Mrs. Miller has shown indications that she can occupy her time with stories of more importance. That is about all there is to say.

W. R. B.

Miscellaneous

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING. By Patrick Abercrombie. Holt. 1934. $1.25.

Professor Abercrombie, on the basis of his many years' experience as a regional planner and as Professor of Civic Design at the University of Liverpool, has compressed into a very small book the broad subject of man's conscious attempt to mould his environment. He deals not only with historical development of the form of cities, but also with man's modelling of the countryside to serve his needs.

The book is divided into three parts. The first is a quick survey of the development of the pattern of the city from an Egyptian workers' village to the monstrous metropolis of the present. The second deals with the practice of city planning: its objects and methods. The third part treats of the planning of the countryside for the most practical use of natural resources as well as the preservation of natural beauty.

Professor Abercrombie points out that in England the country has been humanly modelled from the days of the Britons down to the Industrial Revolution so that every field would best serve without loss of charm. In America, our development of the countryside has been the haphazard accident of pioneering. We are only now becoming conscious of the fundamental need of country planning to conserve our natural resources as well as to protect the countryside from the backwash of the city in the form of ribbons of roadside slums.

In spite of the differences of American conditions, Professor Abercrombie's outline of the various methods that have been tried and suggested in Europe, and particularly in Great Britain, should help us in developing a basic policy of land control in America.

C. S.

Latest Books Received

BELLES LETTRES

Essays in Criticism. Second Series. Members of the Department of English, University of California. Univ. of California Pr. $2.50. *Thackeray's Literary Apprenticeship.* H. S. Galliver. Valdosta. *The Modernist Trend in Spanish-American Poetry.* G. D. Craig. Univ. of California Pr. $4. *The Aesthetic of Stéphane Mallarmé.* H. Cooperman. New York: Koffern. $3. *Contemporary American Literature and Religion.* H. E. Luccock. Willett. $2. *Poet and Artist in Greece.* E. A. Gardner. Scribners. $1.75.

BIOGRAPHY

The Yellow Briar. P. Slates. Minton. $2. *Adam and Two Eves.* Anonymous. Macaulay. $2.50. *Cecil Sharp.* A. H. F. Strangways in collaboration with M. Karpeles. Oxford Univ. Pr. $3. *The Life of Cardinal Mercier.* J. Gade. Scribners. $2.75. *William Penn.* C. E. Villiamy. Scribners. $3.

DRAMA

Tourists Accommodated. D. Canfield. Harcourt, Brace.

EDUCATION

An Introduction to the Study of Poetry. R. R. Kirk and R. P. McCutcheon. American Book Co. *Profitable Company. Collected.* J. McL. McBryde. American Book Co. *Handbook of Adult Education in the United States.* New York: American Association for Adult Education. *Civic Education in the United States.* C. E. Merriam. Scribners. $1.75. *The Nature of the Social Sciences.* C. A. Beard. Scribners. $1.75. *Geography in Relation to the Social Sciences.* I. Bowman. Scribners. $2.25.

HISTORY

Aspects of Athenian Democracy. R. J. Bonner. University of Calfornia Pr. $2.25. *Italy's Relations with England* 1896-1905. J. L. Glanville. Johns Hopkins Pr. *Lafayette in America Day by Day.* J. B. Nolan. Johns Hopkins Pr. *The Crucifixion of Liberty.* A. Kerensky. Day. $2.75.

INTERNATIONAL

Australia in the World Crisis, 1929-1933. D. Copland. Macmillan. $2.50. *Russia Challenges Religion.* G. Mecklenburg. Abingdon. $1.

MISCELLANEOUS

Tips on Tables. G. Ross. Covici. $2.50. *Social Science Research Organization in American Universities and Colleges.* W. Ges. Appleton. $3. *Stand Up and Slim Down.* E. A. Hornibrook. Doubleday. $1.95. *An Index to Bibliographies and Bibliographical Contributions Relating to the Work of American and British Authors,* 1923-1932. N. van Patten. Stanford Univ. Pr. $6. *The Ethics of Sexual Acts.* René Guyon. Knopf. $4. *The Italian Corporative State.* F. Pitigliani. Macmillan. $2.50.

PHILOSOPHY

The Riddle of Being. G. Wells. Privately printed.

RELIGION

Now I See. A. Lunn. Sheed. $2.50.

TRAVEL

England on Fifty Dollars. S. A. Clark. McBride. $1.90.

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PERSONALS

ADVERTISEMENTS will be accepted in this column for things wanted or unwanted; personal services to let or required; literary or publishing offers not easily classified elsewhere; miscellaneous items appealing to a select and intelligent clientèle; exchange and barter of literary property or literary services; jobs wanted, houses or camps for rent, tutoring, travelling companions, ideas for sale; communications of a decorous nature; expressions of opinion (limited to fifty lines). All advertisements must be consonant with the purposes and character of The Saturday Review. Rates: 7 cents per word. Address Personal Dept. Saturday Review, 25 West 45th Street, New York City.

WHY BE LONELY? Send stamp. Box 434, Spokane, Washington.

WINTER SPORTS; $2 per day, inclu. excellent meals; bath, all modern conven., skating; run by college grads. Beecher Lodge, Budd Lake, N. J.

AFRAID TO SPEAK? New Public Speaking Course will help you. Sent for $1. Deering, Desk B, Box 1020, Oakland, California.

CHEMIST—young man who is now employed—who has five years' experience in routine laboratories—who is studious, patient, reliable, and who would like to get away from work that is pointless and of little intellectual or artistic interest. Salary of secondary importance. Location quite immaterial. Will consider boarding with "right" people as part of salary. Address G. C.

THIRSTY leather bindings crave nourishing libations of LEATHER VITA. Cleans, softens, restores, prevents cracking. Enough for 50 volumes (excellent for golf bags, club grips, luggage, etc., too), $1; sample and booklet "The Care of Leather" 10c postpaid. Dept. H, Leather Vita Company, Inc., 15 West 47th St., New York.

IRREPROACHABLE charactered schoolmarm (employed)—no intelligentsia complex—late thirties, refined—seeks correspondence with cultured Jewish gentleman, loyal American, dignified, honorable! Box 559.

INTELLIGENT WOMAN of liberal thought, likes everything pertaining to intellectual activity, would enjoy meeting woman or gentleman, 40-50, of similar tastes. Object: go places, exchange ideas. Box 560.

ONE OF THE most beautiful spots on the Maine Coast—large enough for small inn—small enough for family or group of friends. Also five-room bungalow, eight-room house. All fully furnished, plumbing, electricity. Private beaches, fine harbor. Rent. Box 561.

FIVE DOLLARS, month ago, for three poems (National Publication!)—last straw! Need job. Negro, 26, intelligent, healthy. Box 562.

COMPANIONABLE youthful woman in thirties, living far enough south of New York to enjoy home and garden on limited income, seeks fresh contacts. Box 563.

FRENCH LECTURER, teacher. Passionately interested in national and international politics and economics; keen observer and analyst; very ambitious to study international fray at close range, but no means. Who will give, loan, or let me earn the money? Can you use my knowledge of world's affairs? Will travel, guide, coach, chaperone, consider anything, anywhere. Am 30, tall, speak English fluently, and (I hear) intelligent. Box 564.

WHO IN CHICAGO or Milwaukee needs wide-awake copywriter-secretary with editorial and advertising experience? Box 565.

YOUNG WOMAN of 24, happily inclined but idealistic, wonders whether there may be a man of humor and kindliness who, being cultured in taste, enjoys some things keenly, including a good companionship. Box 566.

ARTIST, without paints, would exchange paintings for paint. Chromatic.

ARE YOU WONDERING . . . why our ad appears in this column? The AUTHORS' SERVICE BUREAU, 1530 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, wants no writer to lose out through being uninformed of our 15 years' experience in marketing, criticising, editing, rewriting, typing. Metropolitan service; provincial rates. Joan Greeves, Director.

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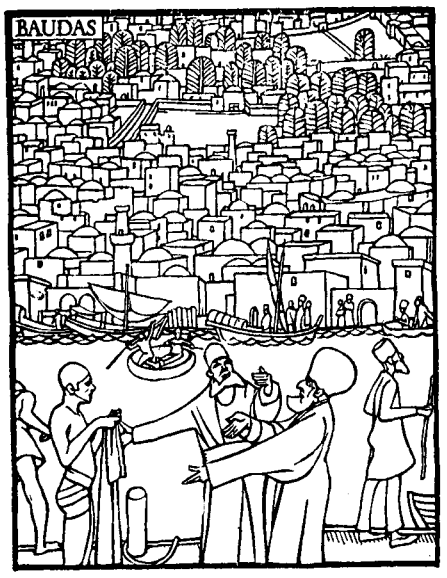
Marco Polo

THE TRAVELS OF MARCO POLO: The Marsden Translation, with an Introduction by Manuel Komroff. Decorated by W. A. Dwiggins. Rochester: Leo Hart. 1933. $5.

ONE of the most original of our American designers, Mr. Dwiggins, has produced in this volume a lively and handsome edition of the Marsden translation of the travels of the Polos.

The volume is a small quarto in shape, a stout little volume comfortable to hold and to read. The text is set in Poliphylus type, in the compact page which this designer likes, with wide margins. In the matter of margins it seems to me that the designer has gone a little too far—the inside margins are so very narrow that it is difficult to open the book easily. In the outer margins are numerous small line drawings of oriental scenes, and side notes set in italics. In addition there are a number of line drawings in the text. The resulting page has considerable distinction, and if it were not for the closeness of the type to the binding edge, the page would be extremely readable.



A DECORATION FROM "THE TRAVELS OF MARCO POLO."

The outstanding decorative feature of the volume is, however, the elaborate double-page treatment of the different Books into which the narrative is divided. Nothing quite so fine seems to me to have appeared for a long time in any American book. Each of the Books is opened by designs of type lines, pictures, and ornaments, printed in five colors, all of great clarity and *bravura*.

The binding is in decorated paper boards, with black cloth back, gold stamped.

This is a book to recommend to all book-lovers who wish to possess at a moderate price an outstanding piece of work by a foremost American designer.

R.

Limited Editions Club

THE PASTORAL LOVES OF DAPHNIS AND CHLOE. By Longus. Translation and introduction by George Moore. Etchings by Ruth Reeves. New York: Limited Editions Club. 1934.

THIS edition of Daphnis and Chloe represents the best efforts of Mr. Porter Garnett to produce a book under conditions of book making which it has been his lifework to exemplify in theory and practice. Consistently he has fought for the superiority of hand work, and has done this with a full knowledge of technical practices, a very considerable skill as a designer, and a clear conception of book making. We have, then, a book produced by ancient means but in the modern spirit.

The type is a delicate roman known as Lutetia: but Mr. Garnett has remodelled several of the letters, in particular the capital E, F, and L, which in the original form were always too broad to be good. The lower case e has been given a horizontal instead of a diagonal cross stroke, and the s has been narrowed—all of these changes making for a more normal as well as a pleasanter shape. Such trivial matters of design make or mar a type face, and are of the essence of good type design.

The paper is particularly good, a soft and flexible hand made, with a delightful surface. The presswork is first-class, as are the margins, the running heads, etc. The deckle edges are somewhat overemphasized, and the initials are not quite happy.

The etchings by Ruth Reeves are in line, and fit the text and the character of the book. They show some influence of the modern French school of line etching, but are much superior in their nearer fidelity to anatomical accuracy. They are appropriate and lovely additions to the book, and are printed on the etching press.

The binding is in lambskin, with gold stamping on the spine and a fine gold medallion on the cover, with appropriate fret-work border.

Less blatant than many of its predecessors, the book is a most exemplary evidence of what a trained printer can do when to complete control of all the factors entering into the making of a book he brings a knowledge and understanding of type and its handling.

R.

Capitalism's Collapse

KARL MARX' "CAPITAL" IN LITHOGRAPHS. By Hugo Gellert. New York: Long & Smith. 1934. $3.

THE practically total collapse of the capitalistic state, as evidenced by the state of the world today, has focussed interest on the monumental work of Karl Marx, chief critic of the old régime and protagonist of the new era. Yet Marx's "Das Kapital" is a formidable book, too large and complex for the ordinary reader, who has to get his Marx at second hand, and too often from sources antagonistic. No one, however, who would understand the road which the world is taking, can ignore Marx. If not infallible, he at least had a clearer conception of the inevitable trend of capitalistic civilization than all the "economists" put together—the very economists who ignored him and stuck to their own dismal science.

Hugo Gellert, a radical thinker, has epitomized Marx in these sixty drawings. It is no slight task to reduce the many hundred pages of "Das Kapital" to such narrow bounds, but if that great Bible is to be understood by the many such an analysis is desirable. It is curious and somewhat ominous, that the ethics of Marx and the socialist philosophy run profoundly counter to the currently accepted doctrines: yet a new world appears above the horizon, a world in which the old concepts have little place. The great prophet of this new world is Marx, and Gellert's interpretation, crude and brutal as it is, has the savor of hope and enthusiasm, the freshness of a north-west wind over the sultry, miasmal swamps of a decadent capitalism.

R.

Announcements

HARRY WEISS announces the publication of "John Peter Zenger, and his Fight for the Freedom of the American Press," by Charles F. Hartman. There are ninety-nine copies, arranged in ten groups, each group having different copies of Zenger's *New York Weekly Journal* laid in. Prices vary from twenty-five to one hundred dollars. It is a smart scheme, and the announcement is pretty flamboyant in style. The printing has been done by Walpole Printers in an interesting manner, and the story of Zenger is well worth telling.

Shakespeare Head Press, Oxford, announces a book on "Paper," with 124 collotype plates, to be issued at six guineas. There is need of a good history of paper making.

R.

PERSONALS

EDUCATED AND TRAVELED Southern girl spending winter near New York. Interested in art, travel, education, picnics, and informal conversation. Is there a man between thirty and forty, single, with similar interests? Would correspond. "Suzan."

POSITION WANTED—Social secretary for morning hours or work at home, knowledge of typewriting and fluent French. F. H.

YOUNG LADY wants to hear from live-wire realtors who will find buyers for northeastern Pennsylvania properties. 10% commission. "Dee."

YOUNG LADY, nearly reduced to last sou, desires position, dental assistant (recently graduated), typing, clerk, or what have you. "Desperation."

"WILL I EVER FIND the one in my mind"—tall, intelligent, brown-eyed and athletic? A sense of humor I'm sure he has, and a love for books and music. There's a Manhattan girl in her twenties he might find interesting. She's tall, attractive, fond of all worthwhile things. Willie Wright.

WILL SOMEONE suggest how a university graduate in English—24, of good appearance—could get to France, there to remain and study for two years? Any "reasonable" type of service will be considered as retribution for aid that might be rendered. "Broke" but willing. Chicagoan.

OLD-FASHIONED BEAU (quiet tastes) wanted for harmless pursuit of happiness. "Thirty-two."

COUNTRY BOARD—Quiet, restful, modern home, strictly rural. Lady living alone offers to share with lady. Reasonable. Ideal for writer or an artist. Write, Mrs. L. B. Barnes, Butler, R. D. 1, N. J.

SEEKING a young, educated male correspondent, idealistic, congenial, possessing a sense of humor. "Trilby."

WANTED: Chess instructor who enjoys teaching women. Box 567.

NEW YORKER, 31, educated here and abroad, some experience foreign banking, anxious to work at anything, anywhere. Box 568.

YOUNG SOUTHERNER, soon visiting Manhattan, desires correspondence with persons liking music, plays, art, literature. Box 569.

HEADMASTER will conduct for the fourteenth time a camping party of boys 11 to 14 through the Grand Canyon country of northern Arizona. Itinerary includes Zion Canyon, Boulder Dam, Snake Dance, etc. Only decent, intelligent youngsters considered. Address Box 570.

WIDOW, lonesome, longing to add flavor and interest to her life, wealthy, residing in New York, Philadelphia or New Jersey, philanthropic, may write Peter Hamilton.

"IF BERNARD SHAW has only unstinted praise for the United States, write 'Frost Bitten Whiskers' in the brackets: ( )." You'll find such breezy bits as this in the amusing question and answer game "Are You a Sacred Cow"? Entertainment for ten people. Postpaid $1.00. L. E. Tilley, 1107 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

VIENNESE, widow, would like to find a publisher for her German poems. M. W. C., 240 Calhoun St., Cincinnati, O.

IS THERE another civilized person with consuming desire to live in country? Our combined resources might buy farm. Light and specialized farming and "money crop" of selected guests. Ex-Writer.

YOUNG LADY, college graduate, artistic and literary, can teach French, wants position for summer as tutor, companion, or assistant. Will exchange for what have you? Box 152, Round Lake, N. Y.

SUCCESSFUL business girl, 27, away down South, desires stimulating correspondence with intelligent, ambitious, unattached man. Dixie.

WANTED—position with antiques, decorating or related activity by young college woman with museum and secretarial experience. Box 571.

REFINED YOUNG MAN—musician, speaks French, college education—desires position as companion, tutor. Box 572.

YOUNG MAN, author and illustrator of successful book of personal adventure, world traveller, editor, lecturer, student of internationalism, with usual defective university education, seeks opportunity to use abilities on any job anywhere however tough or tedious. Box 573.

VERY SUBURBAN—Widow forty-five, college graduate, attractive brunette, not too gray of hair, desires correspondence with man of courage. Box 574.

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AUTHOR OF *Weymouth Sands*

List the titles of the four last books by JOHN COWPER POWYS and you realize the range and temper of his uncompromising contribution to modern literature:

A Philosophy of Solitude
A Glastonbury Romance
Wolf Solent
In Defence of Sensuality

JOHN COWPER POWYS is still that rare and Ripleyesque phenomenon—a novelist without a literary agent, an author without a telephone, a writer without Hollywood aspirations. The philosophy of solitude which he apostrophizes in his apocalyptic, cascading prose is with him a faithful daily way of life. His address—for the public in general or any inquiring reporter in particular—is merely "upper New York State." He speaks like a man possessed—both SINCLAIR LEWIS and CLARENCE DARROW have paid him homage as perhaps the most eloquent speaker in America—and he writes as he speaks.

On the wave of a magnificent British acclaim for *A Glastonbury Romance*, *The Inner Sanctum* now publishes the latest novel by JOHN COWPER POWYS—a romantic sea-saturated story of the one particular spot on earth with which he has been most familiar.

Weymouth Sands will shock and terrify the readers who are not Powys-minded, and hold spellbound those who are. It has taken your correspondents six years to discover how many articulate persons there are in both categories. To enrol in either group all you need is a post-card or telephone call to your own book-seller.

The next red-letter-day for *The Inner Sanctum* is Thursday, March 22nd, when your correspondents begin dancing in the streets for *Nijinsky* . . . This is the story of the life of the great genius of the ballet, told by his wife, ROMOLA NIJINSKY. . . . It is more than a classic of the most dazzling, the most bewitching of the arts. It is literally a human document of the most tragic and glamorous intensity. . . . More any minute now. . . . Other last-minute flashes: . . . *The New Dealers* by THE UNOFFICIAL OBSERVER is the April selection of the Literary Guild of America, and publication is therefore deferred to March 30th. . . . Advance copies have made the Washington Monument tremble. . . . *More Power to You, More Fun In Bed, The First World War*, and *Van Loon's Geography* are marching ahead staunchly on the best-seller lists and down in New Orleans at Mardi Gras time. *Cross Word Puzzle Book—Series Thirty (remember?)* is high on the list. . . . *Little Man, What Now?* is about to begin its career on the screen . . . the book that tore at the heart-strings of two continents, and is lodged forever in the innermost sanctum of

ESSANDESS.

Just to warn you that we are brewing some literary puzzles which will cause you a great deal of trouble in the very near future. Look out for them in

The Saturday Review
OF LITERATURE
25 West 45th St., NEW YORK CITY

Trade Winds

By P. E. G. QUERCUS

☞Poor Old Quercus (poorer than ever) averts his mind from the Income Tax by thinking of pleasanter topics. ☞For instance, the tender ejaculations emitted by Peter Greig, the wine merchant, in describing his vintages. Of his *Château Laujac* 1929 Peter says: "A jolly little wine, velvety pleasant." ☞Of *Château Leoville* 1923, "With an omelet or roast chicken, lovely." ☞Of Romanée St. Vivant 1915, "What a chance for a member of a Duck Club." ☞Of *Graves* 1926, "All ready for the Spring Salmon." ☞Of *Decremenay* (champagne), "A delightful, debutante wine, crisp and fresh as a snowdrop." ☞We opine that it was Peter Greig's experience in the book business that made him such an excellent writer of brief alluring blurbs. ☞Another old bookman now in the wine traffic is the admirable poet and critic, Shaemas O'Sheel, representing the Kluxen winery of Madison, New Jersey. The Kluxens, father, son and grandson, have been in the business of native wines since 1865, "nestling amid historical hills of northern New Jersey," says their folder. ☞The Quercuses are all in favor of encouraging American wines.

☞Simon & Schuster report very large advance orders for the Dickens Life of Jesus, which members of their staff refer to in camera as The Life of Your Lord. ☞Robert Ballou is publishing immediately *And Now, Youth!*, a spirited little book on the spiritual growing-pains of America and the aspirations of the younger generation, by Viola Ilma. Miss Ilma was the founder and editor of *Modern Youth*, a magazine that in its brief history uncovered much rising talent. ☞Frank V. Morley, visiting here on behalf of the London house of Faber and Faber, arranged for the English publishing rights of Franklin D. Roosevelt's new book. ☞Saturday lunchtime patrons of a 45th Street ordinary have been excited to see Buckmaster Fuller's thrilling *Dymaxion* car parked outside their rendezvous. It looks like an airplane without any wings. ☞Two powerful attacks on the international armament industry are announced for this spring—one by Engelbrecht and Hanighen (Dodd, Mead) and one by George Seldes (Harpers). ☞A different phase of this tragic subject is Bengal Lancer Yeats-Brown's new book, just out in England, *Dogs of War!* Written in answer to Beverley Nichols's *Cry Havoc*, it is described in these disturbing words by Peter Davies, the London publisher:—

> *Dogs of War!* states an unanswerable case in a manner worthy of a great polemic. The author addresses his reply to the three parties principally concerned; he provides a powerful argument to Women; he proves convincingly the justice of his case to Men; and he makes a few trenchant observations to Mr. Beverley Nichols. He clearly demonstrates that War is inevitable until Human Nature undergoes a drastic change, that a pretence of Internationalism is no lasting remedy, and that we shall not attain Peace by being unprepared for War; and he further shows that War's cruelties and horrors are no greater than those of Peace. Finally, he lays down that War (and he speaks as one who took his part in it), so far from being degrading to Human Nature, as is affirmed by those (such as the author of *Cry Havoc*) who never saw it, brings out, among all its pain and suffering, many of the highest attributes of Man.
>
> The main conclusion of the book, which is a closely reasoned analysis of Psychology and Fact (and not a mere hysterical tirade), is that War, though horrible, is inevitable in the present condition of the World.

☞Someone, we don't know who, laid on embarrassed old Quercus's desk the following newspaper ad:—"Wanted, GOATS. Must be of good breed with full beard and shapely horns; of exemplary habits; preferably descendants of famous Harlem goats. To be entered in Goat Show to determine finest male in greater city." ☞Quercus appreciates the compliment, *butt*—

☞Miss Marion Dodd, of the Hampshire Bookshop in Northampton, Mass., tells us the interesting news that her shop has been appointed a special repository for the Oxford Press in Western New England. The Hampshire will keep on display a full assortment of standard Oxford Press titles and is making one elbow of the shop an Oxford Browsing Corner. ☞With so many college communities near-by (Smith, Mt. Holyoke, Amherst, Williams, Dartmouth, etc.) this should be an appreciated innovation. ☞Ruth Hard writes that the Stephen Daye Press (Brattleboro, Vermont) is branching out. Beginning April 1st its publications are to be sold in the East by Mr. Joe Consolino (who also carries the SATURDAY REVIEW in the Trade) and the Press will shortly announce its first appearance in the field of fiction. ☞Old Quercus noted with great regret the death of F. Anstey whose *The Brass Bottle, The Tinted Venus, Vice Versa* gave him so much pleasure years ago. Not to have read F. Anstey in the days of the old *Strand Magazine* is never to have been young—and *The Tinted Venus* would make one of the most hilarious moving pictures ever seen. ☞We were pleased by the ingenuity of a publisher's page of secret writing about *The Blonde Countess*—we dipped the sheet in water as instructed and out came Major Yardley's mystic chemicals—we put it in the briefcase to make an item for these Winds—when we took it out to look at it again, the text had disappeared—we think it said Longmans Green?

☞Mr. Ernest Boyd answers our query of a couple of weeks ago as to when an Irishman is not an Irishman. We quote his letter in part:

> I believe that one can be Irish without ever having been in Ireland. I have known people of Irish birth, that is, both parents being Irish, who have arrived in Ireland speaking only French and Irish and, therefore, unable to make themselves understood, since the language currently spoken in Ireland happens to be English. I have even known Englishmen to be arrested in Ireland as German spies because they wore Irish kilts and refused to answer those who addressed them in the hated language of the oppressor. None the less, I should not accept the word of these people as final in matters which depend upon a prolonged and intimate knowledge of Ireland and Anglo-Irish speech. The Irishman to whom you refer obviously comes under this head.

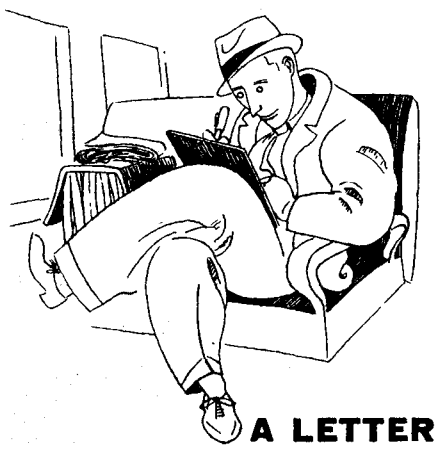
☞*The Nation* of March 7 carries an editorial on a certain book advertisement which "quoted seven reviewers, each of whom found that the writer under consideration had something in common with a different important novelist. According to these seven enthusiastic critics, this promising young author is comparable with George Eliot, Charlotte Brontë, Arnold Bennett, Theodore Dreiser, John Galsworthy, Charles Dickens, and the 'Classic Greeks.'" *The Nation* does not specify what book is in question; from the evidence, however, it looks as if *The Saturday Review* was responsible for the comparison with Charlotte Brontë. Following *The Nation's* precedent in omitting the title, we quote from our review of February 3:

> Any author who essays a story playing in the West Riding of Yorkshire . . . inevitably risks comparison of her work with that of Charlotte Brontë. No comparison could be more unfair for it rests merely on identity of environment and the accident of a persistent economic condition. Yet we confess that as we read ———— the ghost of Miss Brontë walked . . . and its effulgence made the modern novelist pale.

☞May we suggest to *The Nation* that remarks about the fulsomeness of book reviewing should be based on reviews, not advertisements?

☞Speaking of book advertising, a curious inversion occurs in an excellent ad for *Murder in the Calais Coach* by Agatha Christie (Dodd, Mead). The copy reads: "Can you solve the problem of who stabbed the benevolent looking American named Ratchett?" It so happens that Ratchett is described several times in the book as being particularly sinister in appearance, and every one is delighted when he is bumped off. Typographical error, no doubt; certainly there was no point in altering his appearance.

☞We are delighted to receive from Mr. Thomas H. Uzzell the first issue of his new magazine for writers, *The Blue Pencil*. Set in typewriter type with home-made illustrations, it carries the motto "Parvis e Glandibus Quercus," which automatically enlists our support.



A LETTER FROM A SALESMAN:

"I started the galleys of SEVEN GOTHIC TALES as the train pulled out of New York and finished them as we pulled out of Rochester. I had not so much as moved for dinner or a cigarette. As a matter of fact I went to bed without dinner and didn't care much, for I was in a state bordering on what Fort would have called 'a translation into the positive absolute.'

"SEVEN GOTHIC TALES is enormous. It is monumental. It is terrifying and delightful. It is a combination of all the great masters rolled into one and most of them lose in comparison. Can you imagine Lucifer, Bacchus and Pan as editors choosing the most startling, beautiful, amusing and mystical episodes from the works of Chaucer, Boccaccio, Rabelais, Voltaire, Balzac, De Maupassant, Huysmans and Arthur Machen? No? Well neither could anyone else, I guess, until he had read this book. It must seem absurd but the thing absolutely defeats you. It is magnificent.

"Try to fancy a conversation between an arid virgin of sixty and a murdering exactor and valet posing as a Cardinal in a hay-loft surrounded by flood waters which are slowly creeping upon them. The virgin is a mental case who believes herself to be the greatest courtesan of her day—the breathing incarnation of the 'Whore of Babylon.' You couldn't possibly.

"Or try to imagine a love scene between an heroic giantess of the woodlands and a beautiful, angelic and effeminate young officer of Hussars who is interested in marrying her to escape disgrace and ruin because of a reprehensible affair and who wonders throughout if her skeleton will live up to the marvelous promise of the flesh.

"Or consider, if you can, a scene where an effete, impotent and physically enormous Italian Prince of sixty, on learning from a girl, dressed as a boy, that it was she who aided in making him cuckold by delivering his wife into the arms of her lover, apologizes to the friend he thought had betrayed him and with whom he was just about to duel, and dies on the spot of his love for a girl of seventeen. This Prince might have stepped from the pages of Oscar Wilde or Norman Douglas; I forgot to mention them before.

"Dorothy Canfield, in her introduction, speaks of the flavor of unknown fruits and I can see what she means—I should have thought of the fruit of Eden and the fall of man—forbidden fruits. As a matter of fact, I think that secret societies may be formed because of this book—that duels will be fought and reputations ruined.

"And that reviewers will spend many sleepless nights searching for similes and general inspiration and that it may go just as far as Anthony Adverse did toward restoring a taste for what is fine and beautiful and arresting in literature.

"And to be shockingly anticlimactic, may I suggest that Satan, on a worldly holiday, bored with human pomps and grandiose philosophies, smirking at our frailties and puzzled by our pain, decided to write a book?"

Sincerely, Ray Healy

SEVEN GOTHIC TALES
By Isak Dinesen

is the April selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club, the only collection of short novels ever chosen by any book club. Send coupon below, or write today for a handsomely printed, 8-page booklet, which contains Dorothy Canfield's exciting and informative introduction to the Tales. This will come to you at your request.

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